

**ST MARY'S  
OLD SWINFORD  
Parish Church  
MONTHLY NEWS  
MARCH 2019  
ONLINE EDITION**

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OLD SWINFORD  
Parish Church  
MONTHLY NEWS  
MARCH 2019**



**50p**

**CURATE:**

The Revd Alex French  
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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
<b>Curate Day Off</b>	Friday

**OTHER REGULAR EVENTS**

Prayer Group	Third Wednesday in month, 10 -11 am	Tel: 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

<b>Reader:</b>	Mr Roger King	379800
<b>Church Wardens:</b>	Mrs Judy Hall	377349
	Mr Antony Tatford	822661
<b>Director of Music:</b>	Vacant	
<b>PCC Secretary:</b>	Miss Katey Fletcher	378182
<b>Monthly News Editor:</b>	Mr Alec Beevers	444229
<b>Safeguarding Officer:</b>	Mrs Liz Fourness	394359
<b>Church Hall and Coach House: - Bookings:</b>	Parish Office	441003
<b>Parish Administrator and Publicity Officer:</b>	Mr John Sutton	441003
<b>Parish Office:</b>	Open 9.00 am -1.00 pm Tuesday to Thursday, 9.00 am to 12.00 noon Friday Closed Saturday, Sunday and Monday	441003
<b>Church website address:</b>	<a href="http://www.stmaryschurcholdswinford.org.uk">www.stmaryschurcholdswinford.org.uk</a> E-mail: <a href="mailto:st.mary.os@btconnect.com">st.mary.os@btconnect.com</a>	
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<b>Magazine e-mail address:</b>	<a href="mailto:stmary.parishmagazine@hotmail.co.uk">stmary.parishmagazine@hotmail.co.uk</a>	

## 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.

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## PARISH REGISTER

### Funerals

16.1.19	Pearl Doran	Aged 74
4.2.19	Barbara Hobson	Aged 93
4.2.19	Margaret Shakespeare	Aged 65
12.2.19	Ivan Price	Aged 80
15.2.19	Florence Wooldridge	aged 94
15.2.19	Patricia Croyden	Aged 91
15.2.19	Ralph Heeley	Aged 91

## DIARY - MARCH 2019

Saturday 2	10.00-12.00 noon Open Church and Vestry Hour
<b>SUNDAY 3</b>	<b>SUNDAY BEFORE LENT</b>
	3.00 pm Baptism
Monday 4	7.30 pm Standing Committee
Wednesday 6	9.00 am Morning Prayers and Staff Meeting
	7.30 pm Holy Communion and ashing for Ash
	Wednesday
Thursday 7	10.30 am Holy Communion
Saturday 9	10.00-12.00 noon Open Church and Vestry Hour
	10.00 am Marriage preparation day in the Coach House
<b>SUNDAY 10</b>	<b>FIRST SUNDAY OF LENT</b>
	Worship Together
Monday 11	2.00 pm Lent course in the narthex
Tuesday 12	2.15 pm Mother's Union meeting
	7.30 pm Lent course in the narthex
Wednesday 13	9.00 am Morning Prayers and Staff Meeting
	7.30 pm Baptism preparation
Thursday 14	10.30 am Holy Communion
Saturday 16	10.00-12.00 noon Open Church and Vestry Hour
<b>SUNDAY 17</b>	<b>SECOND SUNDAY OF LENT</b>
	Rev'd Nikki Groarke Archdeacon presides at the 10.00 am service
	3.00 pm Baptism
Monday 18	2.00 pm Lent course in the narthex
Tuesday 19	2.00 pm Tuesday Tea in the Coach House
	7.30 pm PCC meeting
Wednesday 20	9.00 am Morning Prayers and Staff Meeting
	7.30 pm Lent course in the narthex
Thursday 21	10.30 am Holy Communion
	7.30 pm Coach House AGM
Saturday 23	10.00-12.00 noon Open Church and Vestry Hour
<b>SUNDAY 24</b>	<b>THIRD SUNDAY OF LENT</b>
Monday 25	Oldswinford Primary School using church in the afternoon and evening.
Tuesday 26	2.15 pm Tuesday Tea in the narthex
	7.30 pm Lent course in the narthex
Wednesday 27	9.00 am Morning Prayers and Staff Meeting
	2.00 pm Lent Course in the narthex
Thursday 28	10.30 am Holy Communion
Saturday 30	10.00-12.00 noon Open Church and Vestry Hour
	9.30 am The walking group meet for a walk in Woodgate Valley
	7.30 pm Friends of the Music Concert in church
<b>SUNDAY 31</b>	<b>MOTHERING SUNDAY</b>

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## LETTER FROM THE CURATE



Dear Friends

I feel the need to start with a confession. Earlier in the week I decided to go through the vegetable drawer in my fridge to see if I had any onions. Much to my surprise and horror I found tucked in the corner, a partly eaten bag of potatoes that were over two months out of date (in fact they should have been eaten before the New Year)! I had completely forgotten that they were there. I assume that each tug of the draw had gradually shifted their position, sliding the bag to the back, tucking it away out of sight as well as out of mind.

As I retrieved the half eaten bag to throw it onto the compost heap, I noticed that something remarkable had happened. Despite the darkness and cold, conditions which were anything but life-giving, the potatoes had sprouted. In this adverse environment of ice-cold blackness and despite a complete lack of care and attention on my part, new life had broken forth. Shoots were growing, pushing outwards towards the light.

Shortly we will celebrate during the Easter festival the ultimate act of love, that of giving your life for another and the profound and everlasting change that this brings into all of our lives. In giving up his life for you and me on Good Friday and through obtaining new life three days later in the resurrection on Easter Sunday, Jesus in these two acts created new life, fresh possibilities. We can experience this each and every day by simply asking Jesus to walk with us in the ups and downs of our lives, experiencing the fresh possibilities that he brings.

As you're walking to and from church or the shops or to your friends and neighbours, take a look around you at what is happening to the insects, animals and plant life. You can't help but see new growth, fresh life breaking out all around. That out of the cold and gloom of winter, newness and growth is there. In fact this is the source of the tradition of eating Easter eggs as the chocolate egg represents real eggs which contain new life within them.

My potatoes have been placed on the kitchen window ledge to continue sprouting until they are ready to be planted in the garden. They will act as a reminder for me during Lent that no matter how dark, cold and unhappy we may feel, new life can shoot forth from these apparently hostile, barren conditions if only we would expose them to the light of Christ.

I wish you and all those who you love a reflective and productive Lenten observance, one which prepares the soil of your heart to discover where new life abounds for you and for your family this Easter.

Grace and peace.

*Alex*

## DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

**Our APCM meeting**, at which we elect churchwardens and members of our PCC, will take place on Sunday 28 April. The format will be the same as last year in that our 10.00 am service will take place in the church hall and will be followed immediately by the APCM meeting.

**Parish Quiet Day Monday 8 April Holland House.** Our parish quiet day will focus on the theme of exploring the death and resurrection of Jesus through paintings. The day costs £30 which includes morning and afternoon tea/ coffee, lunch and Communion. If you are interested in attending then please sign up at the back of church. If you would like to come but the cost is a barrier to attending then please speak to Alex.

The social committee are organising a **cheese and wine evening** which will be held in the church hall on Saturday 4th May 7.00 pm—9.00 pm

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## BELL RINGERS' CORNER

On 7<sup>th</sup> February, the Old Swinford bell ringers and their guests attended their annual evening out. The function was held at the Rainbow Palace Chinese restaurant in Stambermill.

We chose to use this venue again, having enjoyed similar evenings there over the past few years. We were presented with a series of authentic Chinese dishes for us to tuck into, and a very jolly evening was enjoyed by all!

Whilst enjoying ourselves there, we were able to anticipate a full year's ringing ahead. Not only service ringing on Sundays and practice evening on Thursdays, but also around a dozen weddings to ring for.

If you think that you, or a family member or friend, might be interested in finding out a little more about bell ringing then contact John Sutton on 01384 441003. Practice takes place on Thursday evenings at 7.30 pm. Visitors are always welcome.



**Stephen Howard**

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## WENDY TRANTER RECEIVES ST WULFSTAN CROSS AWARD

Over 30 members of St Mary's and many friends attended a special St Wulfstan's Day service in Worcester cathedral on 19 January to celebrate the presentation of the St Wulfstan Cross to Wendy. In a beautiful Sung Eucharist service with full choir, Bishop John paid tribute to the exceptional service and inspiration that Wendy had given to the church. After the service many of the congregation stayed on to congratulate Wendy on her award and share in her celebration.

Extracts from the Cathedral's press release for the event are given below.



The Bishop of Worcester, Dr John Inge has presented Wendy Tranter, longstanding member of St Mary's Church in Oldswinford, Stourbridge, with the Cross of St. Wulfstan, an award that pays tribute to individuals who have made an outstanding contribution to the life of the Church in the Diocese of Worcester.

Wendy was confirmed in the Church of England aged 13 and has played an active role in the church ever since, celebrating her 90<sup>th</sup> birthday last year. She has served in the choir for 38 years, ran the Sunday School for 66 years and recently organised her 50<sup>th</sup> Christingle service for the Children's Society. Wendy was also the first woman to hold an office at St Mary's Church, serving as PCC Secretary for 25 years. She still takes communion to local nursing homes.

Wendy said: "I felt very humbled to receive the letter from Bishop John saying that I was to be awarded the St. Wulfstan Cross and it's all been a little overwhelming. It has been one of my greatest joys to work for God in his Church throughout my life."

Bishop John said: "Wendy's witness and ministry has been and continues to be exceptional. I was delighted to give her this award in thanksgiving for the service and inspiration she has given and the way in which her commitment to the Lord Jesus has touched lives for good and for

God."

## A LETTER FROM WENDY

Thank you so much to all those kind members of our church who travelled to Worcester Cathedral on St Wulfstan's Day to support me. I felt you all surrounded me like a "wall of defence".

I was humbled to receive the award of the Cross of St Wulfstan, and shall wear it with pride, remembering St Wulfstan who must have been an exceptional man of his time, living during the reign of William the Conqueror.

On my Christian journey to have served God in His church has been an honour and a privilege, and has always given me the greatest joy.



**Wendy Tranter**

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## EASTER LILIES



The Church will be decorated for Easter on Saturday 20 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 Sally Frost. Donations can also be put in yellow gift aid envelopes. Please mark these "For Flower Guild".

Thank you very much.

**Sally Frost**

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## ODE TO A WHEELIE BIN

The sun came out this morning  
And brightened up my mood –  
It sparkled on the dripping trees,  
And made me feel so good  
That I pruned the rampant fig tree  
To fill the wheelie bin.  
I hope the pieces aren't too big  
It would be a heinous sin –

Punished by the council  
Who will leave it in its place  
And not put it in the crusher –  
So I just have to face  
Placing all those weeds and grass,  
And things with thorns that rip,  
Into large green bags again  
And take them to the tip.

**Carole Duff**



## **ST MARY'S WALKING GROUP - JANUARY WALK**

The walk started in Kinver with 17 walkers plus 1 dog, heading via Church View Gardens and Meddins Lane to Holy Austin Rock Houses car park. Here we joined the route marked with purple way markers, the Rock House Trail, part of the Centenary Trail celebrating in 2017, 100 years since the National Trust were given 200 acres of Kinver Edge.

This route has some steep slopes, up and down. There are some interesting sites along the way. Nanny's Rock, named after a reclusive inhabitant who made herbal potions, is a five roomed cavern, first inhabited by Meg-o-Fox Hole who died in 1617.

Along the path there were pieces of stone walling said to be from the Bronze Age.

Further on is Vale's Rock which contains a rock house that was occupied until the 1960s by Jack Leyland who made besoms (twig brushes) from the Edge's birch trees.

After a brief stop for the customary January mulled wine, we moved on passing by an underground reservoir, finally arriving back on the Edge and walking along to the Toposcope.

From here, we made our way down into the village for lunch at the White Harte. Once again the weather was kind to us and an enjoyable walk was had.

**Malcolm Frost**

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### **LENT COURSE**

During Lent Roger King, our Reader, will be presenting a course to explore the relationship between science and Christianity. Each session will be held twice a week in the narthex.

- Session 1 Introduction
- Session 2 Beyond Reason? Science Faith and the Universe
- Session 3 An Accident in the Making? Creation, Evolution and Interpreting Genesis
- Session 4 Is Anybody There? Freedom to Choose

The course is based on material produced by the Faraday Institute for Science and Religion ([www.faraday-institute.org](http://www.faraday-institute.org)). You don't need any scientific knowledge to take part, you just need to be interested and open-minded. Please register your interest on the sheet at the back of church.

## ST DAVID'S DAY

St David was a sixth century Welsh monk who died in 589 AD. He is the patron saint of Wales. His feast day falls on 1st March every year.

It is said that David was born on a cliff top in South-West Wales during a fierce storm. Both of his parents were descended from Welsh royalty. His father was the son of the Prince of Powys and his mother daughter of a chieftain of Menevia, which is now the cathedral town of St David's. In medieval times, legend had it that David was the nephew of King Arthur. His birthplace is marked by the ruins of a tiny chapel close to a holy well.



He was educated at the monastery of Hen Fynyw before becoming a priest. His tutor was St Paulinus. It is said that David performed a number of miracles during his lifetime including restoring the sight of Paulinus. His best-known miracle happened when he was preaching to a large crowd. He caused the ground upon which he was standing to rise up into a small hill so that he might be seen and heard the better by those who were present. As he did this a white dove was seen to settle on his shoulder.

David travelled throughout Wales and England as a missionary. Whilst on a pilgrimage to Jerusalem he was consecrated a bishop. He also established twelve monasteries including one at Glastonbury and one at Menevia (St David's), which he made his bishop's seat.

He imposed a very austere lifestyle on himself, drinking only water and eating only salted bread and herbs. Sometimes as a penance he would stand up to his neck in a freezing cold lake whilst reciting from the scriptures. Perhaps there is some virtue in this lifestyle, since some accounts have him living to over 100 years of age. He also imposed this regime on his fellow monks, requiring them to haul the plough through the soil themselves, rather than employing oxen to do it for them!

According to legend and recorded in English poetry in the early 1600s, David required Welsh soldiers who were about to fight Saxon invaders from England, to wear leeks in their caps. This was in order to distinguish themselves visually from their enemy on the battlefield. The battle itself was also said to have been fought in a field of leeks. Shakespeare makes reference to this legend in Henry V: Fluellen: "If your Majesty is remembered of it, the Welshmen did good service in a garden where leeks did grow, wearing leeks in their Monmouth caps..."

So it was that the leek became symbol of St David and of Wales. It is regularly worn on St David's Day by all soldiers in all Welsh regiments in their cap badges. However, Welsh people outside the military often choose to wear the daffodil on the day. Which brings us to the eternal debate; what is the symbol of Wales, is it the leek or is it the daffodil? Well, we must look to the Royal Mint here. In 1984 when they struck the £1 coin for Wales, which symbol did they choose to put on the reverse? They came down firmly on the side of the leek!

**Stephen Howard**

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

On a sunny February afternoon 16 members celebrated our member Joyce Myatt's 95<sup>th</sup> birthday.

The service and meeting was led by Revd Sue Oliver using the topic of Sheep and the Good Shepherd. She gave a full account of her life and call to the ordained ministry. Her early life was spent in rural villages, mainly in the West Riding of Yorkshire. Aged 8, moving to Stourbridge, an urban situation using a strange Black Country dialect, was quite a shock.

Attending the Girls' High School she made good friends but left for academic pastures new and worked in the Probation Service. Eventually, feeling drawn into lay readership and quickly into ordained ministry, she trained at Queen's College then on to Crophorne rural parishes based at Holland House.

For four years she ministered in Lincolnshire then back to Pensnett. In 2018, due to pollution triggering bad health, she now ministers in several rural parishes in the Clent area and oversees deanery readers and incumbents - quite a workload.

So following the lead of the Good Shepherd she has come full circle into a very rural, but local fold, safe and sound with Him.

### Dates for your diary

Friday 1 March 10.30 am New Road Methodist Church - World Day of Prayer

Tuesday 12 March 2.15 pm in the Coach House - Mothers' Union Meeting  
"Planting for Hope in Uganda" Speaker - Kate Oakley. All are welcome

**Dawn Nex**

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### FROM THE DIOCESE

**Shrove Tuesday** will be celebrated on 5 March, in advance of Ash Wednesday, the first day of Lent. It is a day of penitence, to clean the soul and a last chance to celebrate and feast before the start of Lent.

Historically, Christians would undergo the ritual of shroving, where they confessed their sins and would receive forgiveness for them. Through receiving forgiveness for sins, people are released from the guilt of having caused them. It is believed that traditionally a 'shroving bell' was rung to call people to confession; today, in some places, it is still rung, but it is called the 'pancake bell'. This name arose from the story of a woman of Olney, Buckinghamshire, who in 1445 heard the shroving bell whilst making pancakes and ran to the church, still in her apron and clutching her frying pan.

Christians often celebrate and indulge in food on Shrove Tuesday, because Lent is a time of abstinence with many Christians choosing to give up certain foods. In the past, in order that foods were not wasted, on Shrove Tuesday families would use up all the foods that would expire during the forty days of Lent. Pancakes became widely associated with Shrove Tuesday because they were a dish that could use up perishable items like eggs, milk and fat.

**Sam Setchell**

## LETTER FROM THE ARCHDEACON OF DUDLEY

Driving to church one Sunday morning recently I heard a report on the radio about 'slow art'. Not something I had considered before, but I discovered there is a Slow Art Movement, and a Slow Art Day (6 April this year), with a mission to help more people discover for themselves the joy of looking at and loving art.



Henry David Thoreau said, "It's not what you look at that matters, it's what you see". The idea of looking slowly is to make discoveries and experience creativity in new ways. Statistically visitors to galleries view art masterpieces for an average of just 17 seconds, which is perhaps unsurprising in our fast-paced, sound-bite society, and this movement is seeking to challenge that, to slow people down.

This made me wonder if we might do well to embrace 'slow prayer' this Lent, and slow reading, and slow looking. Elizabeth Barrett Browning's oft quoted words remind us of the need to look slowly:

"All of earth is crammed with heaven  
And every bush aflame with God.  
But only those who see take off their shoes."

What do we see each day?

Do we see Jesus in the face of others? Do we glimpse anything new in a familiar Bible passage? Would we have recognised the Messiah for who he was when he was presented in the temple as the elderly Simeon and Anna did, or would we, like the remainder of those about their business that day, simply not have noticed? Would we have pushed through the crowds to touch the robe of Jesus, or simply passed the throngs by, assuming the rabbi was another rabble rouser? Do we see, and take off our shoes, because we are on holy ground, or do we miss opportunities because we don't look slowly enough? Do we take time to make discoveries which bring us joy and make us love God more?

Lent is an opportunity to embrace the discipline of slow, that we might see "God's glory displayed in the face of Christ." (2 Cor 4:6) We might choose to take in some slow art too!

**Nikki Groarke**

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