

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

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Parish Church
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JUNE 2019**



50p

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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

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

Reader:	Mr Roger King	379800
Church Wardens:	Mrs Judy Hall	377349
	Mr Antony Tatford	822661
Director of Music:	Mr Richard Hall (Temporary)	
PCC Secretary:	Miss Katey Fletcher	378182
Monthly News Editor:	Vacant	
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 Thursday, 9.00 am to 12.00 noon Friday Closed Saturday, Sunday and Monday	441003
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

Baptisms

21 April	Kelani Curtis Spears
5 May	Sophie Walters
	Noah Oldnall

Weddings

11 May	Peter Rought and Bridget Giblin
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Funerals

1 May	Alec Beevers	Aged 80
9 May	Geoff Skelding	Aged 86
13 May	Bernard Waldron	Aged 71

DIARY - JUNE 2019

Saturday 1	10.00 – 12.00 noon, Open Church and Vestry Hour 1.30 pm Wedding
SUNDAY 2	SECOND SUNDAY AFTER ASCENSION DAY 1.00 pm and 3.00 pm Baptisms
Tuesday 4	Open the Book team to Oldswinford Primary School
Thursday 6	10.30 am Holy Communion in church
Saturday 8	10.00 – 12.00 noon, Open Church and Vestry Hour with Mission Coffee Morning
SUNDAY 9	PENTECOST
Monday 10	Magazine copy date for July/August issue
Tuesday 11	11.30 am Holy Communion at Hollycroft 2.15 pm Mothers' Union meeting in the Coach House
Thursday 13	10.30 am Holy Communion in church. 7.30 pm Wardens' Admission Service at St John's, Halesowen
Saturday 15	10.00 – 12.00 noon, Open Church and Vestry Hour
SUNDAY 16	TRINITY SUNDAY
Tuesday 18	Open the Book team to Oldswinford Primary School 2.00 pm Tea in the Coach House
Wednesday 19	11.00 am Rotary Coffee Morning in the narthex 7.00 pm Mary Stevens Hospice 'Time to Remember' service in church
Thursday 20	10.30 am Holy Communion in church.
Saturday 22	10.00 – 12.00 noon, Open Church and Vestry Hour
SUNDAY 23	FIRST SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY
Tuesday 25	Parish Office open this week 2.15 pm Tuesday Tea in the narthex
Wednesday 26	11.30 am Holy Communion at Holly Lodge
Thursday 27	10.30 am Holy Communion in church
Friday 28	1.00 pm Wedding
Saturday 29	9.30 am Walking Group meet to visit Stroud 10.00 – 12.00 noon, Open Church and Vestry Hour
SUNDAY 30	SECOND SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY

THY KINGDOM COME

As part of this national prayer initiative services of Compline will be held in the Lady Chapel on May 30, 31, June 1,3,4,5,6,7 and 8 starting at 7.00pm

FROM THE RECTORY



Dear Sisters and Brothers,

As I write this letter the UN has just published a devastating report on the rate of extinction of species across the world, all largely as a result of human actions (www.ipbes.net). As Christians we have a God-given task of being good stewards of creation (Gen. 1.28 & 2.15). But the Genesis story also tells how human selfishness and greed led to our broken relationship with God (Gen. 3). The damage to the environment described in the UN report speaks of the consequences of that broken relationship.

With all of the environmental problems that we face, how can we maintain our hope for the future? Our hope is in Jesus Christ who has reconciled all things through his life, death and resurrection (Col. 1.15-20). Jesus has restored the relationship with God that was broken. But this restoration is a work in progress and we need to use the gifts we have been given in partnership with our Lord.

Science and technology offer enormous potential to help us in the task, provided they are approached and used with appropriate humility. In addition, there are actions that we can take as individuals and as a church community that will benefit us, as well as the environment (www.churchofengland.org/environment). For instance, we can use public transport, car-share or cycle more frequently - cutting air pollution will improve our health. We can ensure that our homes and the appliances or the car we buy are as energy efficient as possible - saving energy saves us money. Shopping responsibly, eating less meat and more vegetables is good for us and means a better deal for farmers.

However, a more sustainable environment will never be achieved without new attitudes. The affluent world's relationship with classical economics has been likened to that of addiction – addiction to work, money and consumption. A useful place to start to recover from this addiction might be to rediscover the spiritual disciplines of poverty, chastity and obedience.

Poverty in the sense of keeping the unwanted consequences of wealth always in view and reminding ourselves each day of the alternative reality of Jesus' concern for the poor.

Chastity through a discipline of 'consumer celibacy', resisting the marketer's myth that people are made better by the goods that they buy. We need to take back control of what we buy. This requires us to understand the conditions that goods are made under, who profits from them and their environmental impact.

Obedience to the principle that the world created by God is abundant, with enough for everyone – provided that we restrain our appetites and live within God's limits.

We may feel daunted as we face the challenges posed by care for the environment. But the essential Christian message is that we do not have to carry the responsibility alone. Our partner is none other than God the Creator of all things in heaven and on earth.

Peace be with you,

Roger

CHEESE AND WINE SOCIAL EVENING

For once the Social Committee was able to organize, free of a specific brief for the event on 4 May. It was simply intended to be an opportunity to get together and to enjoy some good fellowship. And so it proved.

Charmian Nex led the evening's entertainment with an informative presentation of cheese tasting with wines to accompany the cheese, alongside a variety of nibbles selected to enhance and emphasise the qualities of the various cheeses. For some the cheese was the star of the show, for some the wine, but without doubt, for her knowledge, enthusiasm and commitment to the occasion the real star was Charmian. Her knowledge of the origins, flavours, nuances, and possible combinations of cheese and wine was eagerly received, considered with much debate and careful sipping.

The Social Committee worked hard on preparing for this event so that there was something for everyone. Alongside the appreciation of good cheeses and wines, a range of quizzes posed challenges for individuals and teams and the opportunity for friends and neighbours to share in the puzzles and the enjoyment they provided. For others, a variety of common parlour games were provided, simple amusements that many may not have played for some time. Aimed at catering for all age ranges - alongside the ubiquitous mobile electronic devices of the twenty first century, the activities of the evening filled the hours with much enjoyment, providing a special opportunity for parish fellowship.

The thanks of all present were shared with Charmian for her generosity of time and knowledge which brought so much to the success of the evening. Thanks also to all members of the Social Committee for their organisation of the event and for ensuring that all ran smoothly. Judging by the buzz of conversation and the giggles as we made our way home there will soon be a call for another similar evening of such mutual enjoyment.

CONFIRMATION

You are invited to enquire about an opportunity to share in some preparation meetings leading to confirmation sometime in the Autumn. If you wish to find out more please have a word with one of the clergy. More details will be shared via the Monthly News for July/August and on the noticeboard in church.

THE ORGANISTS OF ST MARY'S

On the evening of Saturday 30th March, three former Directors of Music at St Mary's (Richard Hall, Robin Walker and Graham Davies) and our long-standing deputy organist (Peter Thomson) took to the instrument to present a diverse array of music, ranging from the meticulous counterpart of J S Bach to the pomp and festivity of Sidney Campbell's Gaudeamus.

Each of these talented musicians brought their particular skills and interpretations to the music they had selected for the evening to provide a programme of outstanding musicianship which was very much enjoyed by the audience.

All-in-all, the recital raised £269 for the music at St Mary's, making it (by far) one of the most successful Friends of the Music fundraising events to date—I must offer an enormous thank you to all who have supported The Friends. Music is a deeply important part of our community and worship and your support for this is truly invaluable. I am confident that, as we welcome James, our new Director of Music in a few months' time, with your help, the music at St Mary's can continue to grow and flourish.

I hope to provide a brief update on the position of The Friends (covering our objectives, and our fundraising and spending to date) alongside my report on the May concert.

For your diary—27th July 2019, 7.30 pm - The Amicus Ensemble (Judith Scholes, flute; William Croft, violin; Alastair Smith, 'cello) play Corelli and Haydn.

Finally, as I start to plan the 2020 concert series, I would be delighted to know what sort of concerts you would like to hear at church. As well as classical items, I hope to book a folk group for an evening next year, but I would love to hear your suggestions—please come and speak to me in the vestry after the 10.00 am or 6.30 pm services on Sunday, or send me an email at wacroft@outlook.com

William Croft
Chair—The Friends of the Music

DID YOU KNOW?

Morning and evening prayers are said most days at nine o'clock and five o'clock respectively. Most Wednesday mornings the clergy are joined by the Reader, Parish Administrator and Churchwardens who then hold a short business meeting immediately afterwards. Anyone is welcome to attend these prayer opportunities which last approximately half an hour. It is a simple service in which you are invited to participate as you wish.



ST JOHN'S EVE

St John the Baptist, a cousin of Jesus, was born around the year 1 BC and died sometime between 28 AD and 36 AD. His feast falls upon 24th June each year and it is unusual in that it celebrates his birth rather than commemorates his death. Amongst many other things he was the patron saint of the Knights Hospitaller of Jerusalem.

The life of St John is celebrated not only by Christians but also by Muslims and various other faiths. He was the son of Zechariah, a priest in the temple of Jerusalem, and Elizabeth. Like the Gospels, the Q'uran refers to their great wish to have a son despite their ages being well beyond those of normal parenting age. Their wish was granted and a son was born to them who showed great wisdom even whilst still a child.

St John famously spent a lot of time acting as the messenger, crying out in the wilderness and living on locusts and wild honey. After this, he upset Herod by rebuking him for marrying his brother's ex-wife, and John was martyred by beheading, his body being thrown over the prison wall. John's disciples came and took the body away and buried it in a tomb.

The burial place of St John was traditionally said to have been the Nabi Yahya Mosque (Saint John the Baptist Mosque) in Sebastia in Palestine. It is recorded that the shrine was desecrated around the year 362 and the bones partly burned. From there some of the relics were rescued and carried to Jerusalem, and then to Alexandria where they were freshly interred in the newly dedicated basilica.

St John's Day falls on 24th June, it coincides with the June solstice otherwise known as Midsummer, and is a Quarter Day in England. Across Western Europe, Midsummer celebrations combined with celebrations for St John's Day. These revelries would usually begin on St John's Eve and involved the lighting of fires to mark the burning of St John's bones.

In England the earliest reference to these customs was in the 13th century. It was said that parish youth would gather on the day to sing songs and play games. At that time a monk at Lilleshall Abbey wrote that: *'In the worship of St John, men waken at even, and maken three manner of fires: one is clean bones and no wood, and is called a bonfire; another is of clean wood and no bones, and is called a wakefire, for, men sitteth and wake by it; the third is made of bones and wood, and is called St John's Fire'*. So there you have it, it seems that a bonfire is actually a bone-fire. Remember that next November 5th.

St John's Wort is traditionally gathered on St John's Eve. This herb is held to possess medicinal properties, and was used by the Knights Hospitaller in this way, especially for dressing wounds. Since medieval times it has been hung over doors and windows to ward away evil spirits. It was also said to grant a vision of St John to a sleeper who placed a sprig beneath their pillow before retiring on St John's Eve. St John would grant the sleeper another year of life. However, if St John did not appear, the prognosis would not be good!



Stephen Howard

AGAPE WITH A DIFFERENCE

Some weeks ago Alex asked if it would be possible to cater for an Agape meal this year, and if so could it take place in church itself. Looking at the space at the bottom of the chancel steps it did look a little tight so the first idea was to restrict numbers, but this wasn't to be – too many of the regular participants at the Agape service would be excluded. Secondly we had to look at where we could accommodate slow cookers and the rest of the food. It had to be close to the congregation.

Saying yes to the idea all went ahead and a small workforce moved all the furniture from the area needed and installed tables and chairs after the Thursday morning communion service. I was amazed how quickly all this was achieved. At 6pm the social committee arrived with food, extension leads, jugs and serving spoons. The tables were laid, all ready for the congregation.

Everyone who had signed the list turned up and we were ready to begin. We progressed through the service, pausing at intervals to eat the different courses. The service was quiet and reflective, punctuated by animated conversations as we ate. It was a wonderful atmosphere and somehow more poignant as we were in church.

At the end of the service when the altars had been stripped and crosses covered the congregation left in silence.

In keeping with this, the first part of the clearing up was also done with a minimum of noise and speech. I was surprised how quickly the church was restored to its usual format. The washing up was completed thanks mainly to Judy organising three stations where this could be done. 'Many hands make light work' was certainly the case that night.

Huge thanks go to all the people who set up, cooked, served, washed up and restored everything to its rightful place. Lastly, but certainly not least, a thank you to Alex who had the vision to hold the service in church and make us realise that with an open mind doing something in a different way was achievable.

After expenses were taken out we were able to donate a sum of £134.40 to the church funds.

Sue Wakeley

PARISH UPDATE

This will be the last issue of the Monthly News during the current vacancy. By the due date of the next issue we will have welcomed John as our new Rector and will be beginning the process of working together under his leadership and guidance in order to build on the mission of St Mary's. Exciting times - when none of us can know exactly what lies ahead but for which all of us can pray and seek God's intentions for us.

On behalf of Judy and I, thank you for your support and assistance during the past seven months. As we said at the APCM, this has been a time of great cooperation and sharing when everyone has played their part..

Encouraging news has been received with regard to the renovations of the North Porch. We have received, and have recommended acceptance of, a quotation for the removal of the damaged plasterwork to enable the stonework to dry out in readiness for repair. Although this will cause some disruption, hopefully you will soon see the evidence of this work as it heralds other tasks which will see the porch returned to a former glory not seen for some years.

Work to address an issue with a blocked downpipe on the church and to repair the path between church and the church hall should soon be undertaken.

A warm welcome is extended to the Revd John Flitcroft, and to newly elected PCC members Chris McCullagh and Drew Owen. A full list of PCC members and the minutes of all meetings are available in a file in the narthex.

There are always opportunities for people to become involved with and to contribute to the many aspects of church - based activities. Do ask if you might be interested in finding out more. The Monthly News committee will welcome a new member at the editorial meeting for this edition. We are hoping to identify someone who may be willing to consider filling the current vacant position of editor. If you might be interested or if you know someone who might please speak to Tony Tatford or any member of the clergy or committee.

The Churchwardens

THE COACH HOUSE



The Coach House is an independent charity, closely associated with St Mary's, that provides accommodation for all sorts of community groups.

It is particularly well-used by groups with special needs, but facilities are adaptable and can cater for up to 40 people.

In promotion of The Coach House you are invited to an afternoon of
Cream Teas on Saturday 22nd June between 2.00 – 4.00 pm.

Do come along , enjoy the hospitality and see for yourself how this facility serves the community—and could serve you.

BELL RINGERS' CORNER



Following the devastating fire at the Notre Dame cathedral in Paris on the afternoon of Monday 15th April. The Archbishops of Canterbury & York, and the Prime Minister Teresa May, asked for bells at churches and cathedrals across the country to ring out in solidarity with the people of Paris. This request was also endorsed by the Central Council of Church Ringers (CCCBR) and was requested to take place on Thursday 18th April (Maundy Thursday).

In line with this request many churches around the country complied and rang their bells to mark the tragedy. This included St Mary's Oldswinford, where the tenor bell was tolled at 7.00 pm for a while in accordance with the request from the authorities.

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 7.30pm. Visitors are always welcome.

Stephen Howard

LETTER FROM THE ARCHDEACON OF DUDLEY

It is a steadily growing, worldwide organisation enabling people to gather weekly, drawn by a sense of community and the promise of well-being. It is facilitated primarily by enthusiastic volunteers who work for more than a million hours each year. It is open to everyone, inclusive and involves all ages. Most people who join in find themselves encouraging their friends and families to come along too, as they love it so much - they quickly become 'evangelists' for this remarkable movement.



Sounds familiar? Is it church I am describing? I wish it were so, especially the last sentence! In fact the phenomenon in question has been described as "the new church", and in a recent newspaper article a volunteer was quoted saying, "The idea of the community has broken down. People don't go to church any more. But here, you come together with a load of people – and you feel embedded in the local area."

The obvious ingredient missing in this description is faith. This volunteer-led new community of which I and millions of others are a part on a Saturday morning is Parkrun, a timed, 5k run taking place in parks all over the world. It's great for building a sense of belonging in a healthy way, but of course it isn't church. Yet perhaps we as church, have things to learn from how it's growing. Especially about the affirmation of volunteers. The first thing that happens in every pre-run briefing is a big shout-out and cheer for that week's volunteers. As we run the course, most runners, (if they are not too breathless!), call out "thank you marshal!" to each and every one, and they always get listed and thanked in the Facebook run report.

On one Saturday in May members of Top Church in Dudley took on all the volunteer

roles at the Dudley Parkrun to serve and become more embedded in their local community and demonstrate that many people do still go to church, (and some run too!).

Much ministry in our churches is undertaken by committed volunteers, faithful lay people similarly putting in millions of hours week by week. Sadly, many of you do this unnoticed, and all too often, unthanked. God, of course, sees what it is done and why, but fostering a culture of gratitude whereby we take a moment to thank anyone who we know has served the church can strengthen relationships and encourage fellow church members no end. Why not make the month of June a '**volunteer thank-you month**', where we all try to consciously show our appreciation to those we see carrying out tasks to enable our churches to function? It would certainly boost morale!

I made a point of thanking our church wardens during the May visitations – they put in huge amounts of work. But can I take this opportunity to thank anyone reading this who volunteers in church or community in any way – you are appreciated very much.

Nicki Groarke

ORDINATIONS 2019

Over the weekend of 22 - 23 June, 16 people will be ordained in Worcester Cathedral to serve in parishes across the Diocese. On Sunday, 23rd June four will be ordained deacon and will begin their first year as a curate. On Saturday 22nd twelve will be ordained priest, including Adam Hadley, currently serving at St Thomas', Stourbridge. Many of us will know Adam and will have enjoyed and benefitted from his friendly, enthusiastic and exciting ministry. We wish all those great joy in their growing ministry. Of course, if you are able, you are welcome to attend either or both of these services.

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

On Tuesday 14th May Brenda Selby led our prayers when we gave thanks for the work done by all involved in Christian Aid Week. Christian Aid began 70 years ago, the idea of Janet Lacey, amongst others, who was moved by the poverty and social needs of the people within her community. This year's support is being given to families in Sierra Leone where childbirth can be a frightening experience.

Our speaker this month was Dawn Nex, member of St. Mary's Mothers' Union, who gave a brief history of needlework throughout the ages. Dawn brought along several samples of her wonderful work, which were greatly admired. These ranged from Gold work, as seen in the Altar Frontal at St. Mary's, Blackwork, Tudor and Jacobean work and Stump work, which has a 3D appearance. Dawn is indeed a very talented lady.

Our next meeting will be on Tuesday 11th June at 2.15pm in the Coach House when our speaker will be from Age UK. Everyone will be most welcome.

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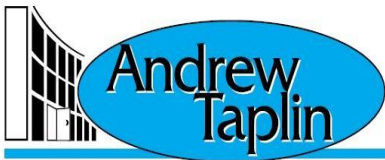


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