

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

ST MARY'S OLD SWINFORD Parish Church MONTHLY NEWS OCTOBER 2019



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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
Clergy 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 James Bradley	07973 934177
PCC Secretary:	Miss Katey Fletcher	378182
Monthly News Editor:	Vacant –Please contact the Parish Office	
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,	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, BANNES 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

None

Weddings

17th August	Ashley Millward and Charlotte Marland
24th August	Harry Allport and Bethany Foster
7th September	Daniel Massey and Kelly Dudgeon
	Hadleigh Jeavons and Lucy Bagnall

Funerals

None

DIARY OCTOBER 2019

Tuesday 1	Open the Book team to visit Oldswinford Primary
Wednesday 2	Holy Communion at Oriel House
Thursday 3	10.30 am Holy Communion in the Lady Chapel
Friday 4	Harvest Festival at Oldswinford Primary School Clergy day off
Saturday 5	10.00 am - 12.00 noon Open Church with Vestry Hour
SUNDAY 6	SIXTEENTH SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY
Tuesday 8	11.30 am Communion at Hollycroft 2.15 pm Mothers' Union meeting in the Coach House 7.30 pm Deanery Synod meeting in the Narthex
Thursday 10	10.30 am Holy Communion in the Lady Chapel
Friday 11	Clergy day off
Saturday 12	10.00 am - 12.00 noon Open Church with Vestry Hour 7.00 pm Harvest Supper
SUNDAY 13	SEVENTEENTH SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY Harvest Festival services 3.00 pm Baptism
Tuesday 15	Open the Book team to visit Oldswinford Primary 2.00 pm Tea in the Coach House
Thursday 17	10.30 am Holy Communion in the Lady Chapel
Friday 18	Clergy day off
Saturday 19	10.00 am - 12.00 noon Open Church with Vestry Hour 2.00 pm Wedding 7.30 pm Viva Musica Concert in church
SUNDAY 20	EIGHTEENTH SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY 3.00 pm Baptism 2.30 - 4.00 pm Tuesday Tea in the Narthex
Tuesday 22	11.30 am Communion at Holly Lodge
Wednesday 23	10.30 am Holy Communion in the Lady Chapel
Thursday 24	Clergy day off
Friday 25	10.00 am - 12.00 noon Open Church with Vestry Hour 12.00 noon Wedding Friends of the Music Concert in church
SUNDAY 27	NINETEENTH SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY Schools' half term holiday week
Monday 28	2.30 pm Tuesday Tea in the Narthex
Tuesday 29	10.30 am Holy Communion in the Lady Chapel
Thursday 31	

FROM THE RECTORY



Dear Friends,

Now that our daughters have grown up and live in homes of their own it seems a very long time ago since Mary and I were looking to move to a home where we could raise a family. Both of us hoped to find a place with fruit trees in the garden and were delighted that the house we found in Smethwick had mature apple trees. They were clearly planted by a wise gardener because their fruit ripened in sequence with the first 'eaters' being ready around early September and the last lasting through to late October.

Especially around the times of blossom and harvest, we feel deeply grateful to that wise gardener who gave such a wonderful, perennial gift to people she or he would never know. A still more profound gratitude is due to God. The Smethwick gardener wisely planted and carefully tended those trees but God gives the annual miracle of that astonishing pink-tinged, white blossom, shocking in its persistence, abundance and fragility. And God gives the miraculous growth of the fruit in its shy and its bold colours, in its wealth of scent and juice and crisp, apple-white flesh.

My brother, Andrew, and his partner, Anita, are wise gardeners. When they were last with us they told us about the apple trees they were cultivating through grafting. Andrew has acquired, by some round-about means, 30 or so young, vigorous crab-apple saplings and he has begun grafting into them various apple varieties. Wielding his grafting knife, he described the process. The 'scion' or bud is a twig-sized portion of the one plant which is grafted onto or into the rootstock of another. This twig is shaped into a point and inserted into a 'V'-shaped cut made in the stem of the crab apple, great care is required to line up the living layers, the cambiums, of the two so that the grafted portion will 'take', thrive and the partners form a strong union. The whole is bound tightly to keep it together and to keep out infection.

It is clearly an ancient propagating technique; Paul, in chapter 11 of his Letter to the Romans, uses it as a metaphor for the union of the Gentile part of the early church, 'a wild olive shoot,' with the 'rich root of the olive tree' which is the inheritance of the Jewish faith.

Two things occur to me. One concerns the continued Brexit crisis, (I am aware that things may have moved on considerably between my writing and your reading). After long years of being, (at least partially), grafted into a European rootstock we might do well as a nation to acknowledge the deep significance of any coming separation. And, in terms of our own future, we might also recognise the care required to make future relationships successful and harmonious; a process which needs all the humility and trust in God Paul urges on his Roman readers.

The second concerns the invitation we as a church make to those who have not yet encountered the living Word of God. We are grafted as branches onto Christ, the rootstock of God, and all our fruit comes from Christ's love for us and in us. God the gentle gardener also seeks to graft in us new fruit-bearing branches. As a community rich with inherited resources, how can we help to ensure the vigour of our 'living layers'? And how do we help God align our shared life with the lives of those God is inviting?

I look forward to our harvest celebrations, on the 12th and 13th of this new month, as a wonderful 'thankyou' to God who gives and blesses us with all good growth.

God Bless You.

John

HARVEST FESTIVAL AND SUPPER



Saturday, 12 October
7.00 for 7.30 pm
in
The Church Hall

**Please see the details on display at
the back of church and sign up to
reserve a place.**
All are welcome

Our Harvest Festival services will be held on Sunday 13 October when you are invited to bring in to church gifts of food and toiletries suitable for donation to the Food Bank.

The 10.00 am service will be the focus of our worship of thanksgiving for the bounty of the world's harvest in whatever form we receive it. Do join us to share this special occasion when we can demonstrate our grateful thanks for all we have as we share our gifts with those who struggle to feed themselves and their families.

HOW ARE YOU SPENDING HARVEST THIS YEAR?

Whatever the weather, whether it has been a wet winter and a dry summer, or indeed a mixture of both, we are fortunate to have farmers who produce a harvest. Many will say that they work with three things: a tractor, the weather and God.

Harvest is a time to celebrate: the produce we all enjoy; the skills of all those who work on the land; and the world that God has given us. We may independently be in awe of the countryside we see, or we may take a silent moment to rest in the beauty of creation. We may seek to do this in an act of worship, joining with many others to give thanks.

The annual County Harvest Service organised by the Chaplaincy to Agricultural and Rural Life (CARL) will take place in the Cathedral on Sunday 6 October. Many members of the Young Farmers' Club (YFC) will help to lead the service, which involves a procession of produce culminating with a traditional, large harvest loaf. This is an opportunity to offer to God the contribution we make in bringing food to the table; to give thanks and pray for others in the agricultural chain upon whom we are dependent; and above all to praise God who gives life to all living

God of the heavens and the earth, You call us to share in the care of your creation and to bring food and fruitfulness from field and farm. Hear our prayer for all who make their living on the land and make us grateful for the work of their hands and for the generosity of your provision. We ask this in the name of Christ. Amen.

FLOWER GUILD



The church will be decorated for Harvest from 9.00 am on Saturday 12th October 2019. All offers of help will be very welcome.

WELCOME BACK

A very warm welcome was extended to the members of St Mary's Choir who returned from their summer holiday to lead our musical worship at the 10.00 am service on 1st September. We hope they all enjoyed a good holiday and are keen to prepare for the busy seasons ahead.



ALL SOULS' DAY

THE COMMEMORATION OF THE FAITHFUL DEPARTED

On Sunday, November 3rd, the 6.30 pm service will take the form of a service of remembrance of all those who have died. In line with our normal procedure, families and friends of those who have faced bereavement during the past year will be invited to join our congregation in a service of thanksgiving and remembrance. The names of the departed will be read out and there will be an invitation to light a candle in remembrance of those who have died.

A sheet will be available at the back of church for you to add the name of those whom you would wish to be commemorated at this service. Our Parish Administrator John Sutton will compile the list so you may, if you prefer, contact John in the Parish Office.



Details of our Book of Remembrance will be available and someone will be able to assist you in viewing a particular entry.

IN YOUR THOUGHTS AND PRAYERS

Please remember the people of Syria where the crisis continues to cause tremendous human suffering to those caught up in it. The conflict is causing the largest refugee disaster in the world. Nearly 12 million people, two thirds of Syrians, are dependent on humanitarian aid.

Since the civil war started in 2011 half the population have fled their homes. Houses and schools have been destroyed, communities lack clean water and sanitation. More than 5 million refugees live in neighbouring countries.

In Syria, Jordan and Lebanon Oxfam are helping more than 2.5 million people with life-saving clean water, sanitation and vital food aid. They are also helping refugees make a living and protecting them from violence and abuse.

Source Oxfam

CHRISTMAS TREE FESTIVAL 2019



Thank you to everyone who attended the planning meeting for the Christmas Tree Festival. It was a very positive meeting with plenty of ideas being discussed. The Christmas Tree Festival is now confirmed as being from Friday 20th December to Monday 22nd December 2019.



The timings will be as follows:

Friday 20th December 11.00 am till 4.00 pm

Saturday 21st December 11.00 am till 4.00 pm

and 6.00 pm till 8.00 pm

Sunday 22nd December 12.00 pm till 4.00 pm

Monday 23rd December 10.00 pm till 4.00 pm

Refreshments will be available for all openings with the addition of mulled wine and mince pies being available for the Saturday evening opening.

Plans are in place to provide entertainment during the Saturday openings but these are to be confirmed.

To aid the successful running of the Festival we will need volunteers to act as stewards and help with refreshments. There will be lists to sign at the back of Church in the coming weeks if you feel able to help in this way.

If you would like to help in any way with the Festival please contact me.

Thank you to everyone who has offered help so far.

Sally Frost

01384 377146

There are many ways in which you might be able to help with the Christmas Tree Festival. Please do share your ideas. Tell your friends. Make a special point of inviting friends and neighbours to come and view the trees. Spare a few hours to steward and to help serve refreshments. All of these will provide you with seasonal fellowship and the opportunity to share the joy and purpose of this fund-raising mission.

KNITTED CHRISTMAS TREES

For the last Christmas Tree Festival many people made Christmas trees using French knitting. These were used to decorate the window sills and the remainder were sold. This year we are going to knit trees using the pattern below. Please feel free to knit trees and hand them in either to Elaine Buchan (Thursday morning service) or Sally Frost.

Cast on 28 sts in green DK wool on straight 4mm needles

Row 1: k (28 sts)

Row 2: k1, k2tog, k to the last 3 sts, k2tog, k1 (26 sts)

Rows 3 to 5: k (26 sts)

Rows 6 to 45: rep rows 2 to 5 eleven times (6 sts)

Row 46: k1, [k2tog] x 2, k1 (4 sts)

Rows 47 to 49: k (4 sts)

Row 50: [k2tog] x 2 (2 sts)

Row 51: k (2sts)

Row 52: k2tog (1 st)

Bind off



Finishing

Note that the cast on edge is the bottom of the tree. Weave in the yarn tail from your cast on stitches.

Sew on your decorations (pom-poms, buttons, beads or sequins - anything you fancy!)

Abbreviations

DK Double Knitting Wool

k Knit

k2tog knit two stitches together

rep Repeat

st(s) Stitches

[....] Repeat the sequence between the square brackets by the number indicated

(..sts) The number in round brackets at the end of the instruction indicates the number of stitches after working the row



MONTHLY NEWS EDITOR REQUIRED

The magazine committee is keen to recruit a new editor, someone who will oversee the compilation and presentation of items for each Monthly News. The editor works with a range of material based on regular information sharing, articles that report on past or advise on forthcoming events associated with church activities, items presented by interested groups or individuals and items the editor may devise as being of general interest to the readership.

The new editor would preferably possess sound IT skills and familiarity with Microsoft Publisher, although training could be provided and the means of presentation could be reconsidered. A period of role-sharing may be appropriate to enable familiarisation and a smooth transition.

Of course, with new individuals new ideas may arise. This may be an opportunity for the Monthly News concept to be developed in a new direction, so all expressions of interest will be welcomed. New ideas and approaches should seek to maintain the relevance of this publication as a means of sharing the mission of the Church.

If you have had no involvement with the Monthly News to this date but would consider future participation, perhaps you would like to share in our meetings and the collective management processes in order to inform your decision. The date of the next editorial meeting of the committee will be on Wednesday 16th October. Please ask a committee member for more details. You will be welcome to come along and discover for yourself how we operate currently.

If you would like to know more or know of someone who might wish to consider the role (or would like to become involved in a different role) please make contact with any member of the committee, Stephen Howard, Brenda Selby, Nigel Perry, Carole Duff, Rod Jukes, Janet Peart, Tony Tatford or John Sutton.

MARK & MOODY

The Parish magazine of St Mary's Parish Church, Old Swinford, has a long heritage going back to the late 19th century. It has undergone many changes of format since it was first published by the firm of Mark & Moody in Stourbridge.

The firm was originally founded in 1840 and was taken over by Thomas Mark in 1861. He relocated the firm to the premises in the High Street, which many people will remember, five years after he took charge. In 1878 George Moody, who started his career as an apprentice, became a partner and the firm of Mark & Moody became established.

In 1890 the firm acquired the County Express newspaper which they continued to publish for the next 82 years.

PRISONS' WEEK - 13-19 OCTOBER

The second Sunday in October is Prisons' Sunday and marks the beginning of a week of prayer for our prisons and all those connected with them, running through to next Saturday.

Prisons' Week has taken place for forty years, with Christians praying for the needs of all those affected by prisons: prisoners and their families, victims of crime and their communities, those working in the criminal justice system and the many people who are involved in caring for those affected by crime on the inside and outside of our prisons.

The organisers of the week say: "Prisons' Week raises awareness and generates prayer. It motivates volunteers to step forward and give their time and gifts, in prisons and in their own communities. It provides an annual focus and reason for Christians to work together, building capacity and motivation to make a difference for people who are out of sight and often out of mind."

Each day of the week, a new prayer brings into focus a different group affected by prison or criminal justice. Churches and individuals are also asked to reflect on what they might do or offer as part of their response, through the range of Christian agencies and charities involved in supporting Prisons' Week. Find out more at <http://prisonsweek.org>.

A prayer for Prisons' Week:

Lord, you offer freedom to all people.

We pray for those in prison. Break the bonds of fear and isolation that exist.

Support with your love prisoners and their families and friends, prison staff and all who care.

Heal those who have been wounded by the activities of others, especially the victims of crime.

Help us to forgive one another.

To act justly, love mercy and walk humbly together with Christ in His strength and in His Spirit, now and every day.

Amen.

CHRISTIAN AID

I have just received the news that in Stourbridge the total raised for Christian Aid this year was £13,357.20. Thank you again to all from St Mary's who helped with the collections and to the considerable efforts made by the Church School.

Mike Blaxland

OCEPS INSET DAY

2nd September

Over the years, much work has been done to develop a strong relationship between St Mary's and OCEPS. This is evidenced in so many ways – by the Open The Book team that attend school assembly every other week acting out a biblical story, by St Mary's welcoming school children to the church at key times during the Christian calendar to explore the meaning of Lent, Advent and baptisms. There is also the annual Year 6 Leaver Service held in July when the children are able to reflect on their experiences at school and thank all staff who have helped prepare them for the next stage of their educational journey.

All governors were invited to join the staff for the morning of the schools Inset day at the beginning of September. It was the first day at OCEPS for our recently appointed Headteacher, Mrs Ellie Game who was previously Deputy Headteacher at Cradley Church of England Primary School. Together, we explored how best we can move forward as a Church school, at the same time trying to define the vision of the school to reflect all that we wish to achieve in the years to come. Much discussion was had as to what values we felt were important for our children to embrace and take forward in their future lives. It became clear that as a Church school, emphasis would continue to be placed on spiritual growth and character development, areas in which OCEPS have been strong as evidenced by past Ofsted reports.

We are confident that the strong relationship we have will be strengthened still further in the months and years to come. Very best wishes to our new Headteacher and all staff at the school for a successful, rewarding and enjoyable new academic year.

Stan Williams & Sally Frost.

LATEST NEWS

New Music Hut

Teachers and pupils at Old Swinford Church of England Primary School are all very pleased with their new music hut. They are starting to make use of the facility which was built over the summer holidays. The hut has been called into service to be used on a daily basis for all peripatetic music lessons throughout the school. Everyone feels that it really is a fantastic space for all children and staff to make the most of.

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

In September we welcomed Kathy Olley who spoke on "Re-cycling". Visiting Malaysia she found black plastic straws on the beach, and then washing into the sea, because a bar was issuing them free with drinks. Within one week of a campaign enlisting locals and visitors, this was stopped and cleared up in one week. This began her crusade at home.

She started writing to producers and supermarkets, and trying to find alternative packaging wherever possible. She gave us many examples to try, or to avoid. Dudley Council issue leaflets and guides, and are in particular very efficient. They also warn against non-recyclable examples in Victoria passage, Stourbridge, and outlets in Merry Hill. It is as well to bear in mind that washing up, and laundry liquids, can be refilled.

Being reminded of the old slogans; waste not want not; make do and mend, could change our throw-away society, into one of extra care for our environment and people, and keep as much of our green and pleasant land as possible. Kathy was thanked for this wake up call to do our part.

Next Meeting: Tuesday 8th October 2.15 pm in the Coach House. Visit to Sri Lanka and Sasi, speaker Kanthi Ariaraj.

All are welcome.

Dawn Nex

CHILDREN'S SOCIETY BOXHOLDERS

Childrens Society Boxholders - Collection campaign 2019 I am planning to start collecting the Childrens Society Boxes during the last two weeks in September, in order to ensure all the monies are collected, counted and the return made to the society by the end of October. I will, as usual, collect any boxes from those unable to bring them in to church. I will have a list of all our boxholders, but if anyone finds themselves unable to bring boxes into church they can always give me a ring to arrange collection, my number is 01384 371247 and there is a message taking service if we are not there.

Maggie Abbotts

A LETTER FROM THE DEAN OF WORCESTER

‘USING SOCIAL MEDIA RESPONSIBLY’

Social media have become a way of life for many people. And like any way of life, social media are an opportunity and a danger. Social media can do good and can cause harm. Using social media well is a craft that needs to be learnt.

The Church of England has recently put forward guidelines for the good and positive use of social media. While designed for those using church social media accounts, they are simple guidelines that we would all be the better for following.

Be safe. The safety of children, young people and vulnerable adults must be maintained.

Be respectful. Do not post or share content that is sexually explicit, inflammatory, hateful, abusive, threatening or otherwise disrespectful.

Be kind. Treat others how you would wish to be treated and assume the best in people. If you have a criticism or critique to make, consider not just *whether* you would say it in person, but the tone you would use.

Be honest. Don't mislead people about who you are.

Take responsibility. You are accountable for the things you do, say and write. Text and images shared can be public and permanent, even with privacy settings in place.

Be a good ambassador. Personal and professional life can easily become blurred online so think before you post.

Disagree well. Some conversations can be places of robust disagreement and it's important we apply our values in the way we express them.

Credit others. Respect copyright and always credit where it is due. Be careful not to release sensitive or confidential information and always question the source of any content you are considering amplifying.

Follow the rules. Abide by the terms and conditions of the various social media platforms themselves.

It would take very little effort on the part of any of us to stick to these. But a huge amount of unhappiness could be avoided, if we did. Some people would not be permanently damaged. Even some lives would be saved.

Peter Atkinson
Dean of Worcester

A LETTER FROM THE ARCHDEACON OF DUDLEY

Over the summer I read the ***Good Childhood Report 2019*** published by The Children's Society, and was sad, but not surprised, to learn that children and young people have become increasingly unhappy as childhood becomes ever more complex. The society's research shows that many children are unhappy with their friendships and their appearance, and are concerned about wider issues like school culture, the experiences of those with low or strained family finances, and whether or not some children actually feel safe during the school day. Too many children are struggling with their lives now, and large numbers are also anxious about their future. Large proportions of children are worried about everything from money and getting good grades at school, to wider issues like crime and the environment.

It is so important that we keep reminding ourselves and each other that working with children and young people is one of our strategic priorities, and that as part of our Kingdom People vision we are ***“dedicated to helping children and young people to belong and be nurtured in faith.”***

We can all play a part in this. Even if we don't have many children in our church, most of us will have contact with children in our family and friendship groups. How can we better mentor them, share faith with them, instil confidence in them and communicate their inherent value to them? How can we help to ease their unhappiness? Perhaps by showing unconditional love, and spending quality time with them; certainly by committing to pray for them.

Mark Russell, Canon of Worcester Cathedral and new Chief Executive of the Children's Society, said in his introduction to the report, “How can we enable children to thrive not just survive. How do we solve problems like rising mental ill-health, millions living in poverty and the scandal of far too many young lives being lost to knife crime and exploitation? We must start by listening to young people. I mean REALLY listening. We need to stop side-lining young people and harness their enthusiasm and radical energy for change.”

As a new school year gets underway, let's commit afresh to helping the children of the Diocese of Worcester to belong and be nurtured in faith. Let's pray for our church schools, all who work with children in paid or voluntary roles, and the Mission Enablers supporting churches as part of our *Calling Young Disciples* project, and let's listen to the children and young people we know and harness their enthusiasm and energy for change, that their future might be full of hope, and our lives enriched by the part they play.

Nikki Groarke

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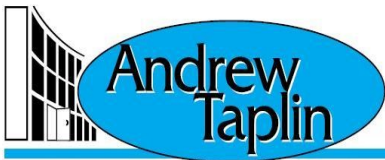


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