

**ST MARY'S
OLD SWINFORD
Parish Church
MONTHLY NEWS
MARCH 2020
ONLINE EDITION**

**RECTOR**

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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 am - 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, 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
Please note the copy deadline for the magazine is the 10th of the month.

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

Funerals

15 January	Margaret Moulton	Aged 79
17 January	Roger Johnson	Aged 76
21 January	Alan Dunn	Aged 84
23 January	Molly Nock	Aged 87
31 January	Marjorie Taylor	Aged 92

DIARY FOR MARCH 2020

SUNDAY 1

THE FIRST SUNDAY OF LENT

- Monday 2 2.00 pm Funeral in Church
7.00 pm Planning meeting re Children's event for 21 March
- Tuesday 3 Open the Book team visit Oldswinford Primary School
7.30 pm Standing Committee meeting
- Wednesday 4 3.00 pm Holy Communion at Oriel House
7.30 pm Baptism Preparation.
- Thursday 5 10.30 am Holy Communion in the Lady Chapel
- Saturday 7 10.00 - 12.00 noon Open Church and Vestry Hour
Lent Prayer Group - Prayer and Discipleship

SUNDAY 8

THE SECOND SUNDAY OF LENT

- Tuesday 10 11.30 am Holy Communion at Hollycroft
2.15 pm Mothers' Union meet in the Coach House
7.30 pm Churches Together in Stourbridge meeting
- Thursday 12 Ham Dingle pupils to visit Church
10.30 am Holy Communion in the Lady Chapel
- Saturday 14 10.00 - 12.00 noon Open Church and Vestry Hour
3.00 - 6.00 pm Worcester and District Bellringers competition

SUNDAY 15

THE THIRD SUNDAY OF LENT

- 3.00 pm Baptism
- Wednesday 18 7.30 pm Lent Prayer Group - Prayer and Discipleship
- Thursday 19 10.30 am Holy Communion in the Lady Chapel
- Saturday 21 10.00 - 12.00 noon Open Church and Vestry Hour
12.00 noon Wedding
2.00 - 4.00 pm Children's Activity and Worship event

SUNDAY 22

THE FOURTH SUNDAY OF LENT

MOTHERING SUNDAY

- Wednesday 25 11.30 am Holy Communion at Holly Lodge.
- Thursday 26 10.30 am Holy Communion in the Lady Chapel
- Saturday 28 9.30 am Walking Group meet.
10.00 - 12.00 noon Open Church and Vestry Hour
7.30pm Friends of the Music present Lazarica Choir.

SUNDAY 29

THE FIFTH SUNDAY OF LENT

- Tuesday 31 2.30 pm Tuesday Tea in the Narthex

FROM THE RECTORY



Dear Friends,

Lent has begun! It's a curious word, 'Lent', it probably originally meant simply 'the lengthening days' or, in other words, 'Spring'!

In the early church, before Easter became the great festival it now is, the Resurrection was celebrated every Sunday and a strict fast was kept from Friday to Saturday night. As Easter gradually evolved into a great annual feast, the fast before it became formalized and prolonged and, eventually, around the seventh century, it was fixed at forty days. *Forty was chosen as a special, Biblical number. It was the length of time that Jesus, and Moses and Elijah before him, spent in the wilderness and it was also thought to be the number of hours Jesus spent in the grave. Also, being roughly a tenth of the year, forty days could be seen as a Christian's tithing of their time to God.*

I think that a connection between Lent and Spring is more important than ever in this penitential season. The connection fits with our growing awareness of the dangers of climate change and a deepening sorrow at the damage our human activity is causing God's creation. This is perhaps why both Christian Aid and the Church of England have decided that combatting climate change and caring for God's Creation should be the focus of their Lenten resources. Christian Aid have an appeal called 'Count your Blessings' which aims to raise money to fund their ongoing campaign to fight the causes of climate change.

The Church of England has a '40-Day Challenge' for Lent 2020 and this is set out in two booklets, one for adults and one for children, called 'Care for God's Creation'. We have purchased some of these booklets and we're making them available for you to use. For each of the forty days there is a Bible reading, a reflection and a suggested action, all with the aim of exploring 'the urgent need for humans to value and protect the abundance God has created.'

Fasting may play a part in the challenge, as will becoming more aware of practical things we can all do to step more lightly on God's earth. But perhaps the most important thing we can do is to learn to rejoice at the beauty and the glorious variety of life on our planet, noticing with joy all the small signs that the miracle of Spring is unfolding once again. Because the more we behold God's love in Creation the more we may be inspired to take better care of it.

God Bless You.



HOLY WEEK AT ST MARY'S

Father in heaven, as your people prepare once more to follow the events of this Holy Week, may we be led by your spirit to deeper insights into your love and saving grace; that we may love you more and serve you better, for the sake of him who died for us and rose again, our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. Amen

Sunday 5 April PALM SUNDAY

8.00 am Holy Communion.

10.00 am Parish Communion to include a reading of the Passion narrative.

This service begins in the Church Hall with the palm procession into Church.

6.30pm Evensong.

Monday 6

11.00 am Chrism Service in Worcester Cathedral.

Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday 6, 7, 8

6.30 pm Reflections and Meditation with Compline.

Thursday 9 MAUNDY THURSDAY

10.30 am Holy Communion.

6.30 pm Agape Meal in Church.

9.00 pm The Watch

Friday 10 GOOD FRIDAY

10.00am Churches Together in Stourbridge procession of witness.

2.00 pm Reflections and Meditation.

7.30 pm Service of readings, reflections and music based on the last 7 words of Christ.

Saturday 11 HOLY SATURDAY

9.00 am Church decoration with refreshments from 10.00 am.

Sunday 12 EASTER DAY

7.45 am Holy Fire. The lighting of the Easter Candle.

8.00 am Holy Communion.

10.00 am Parish Communion with children's activities

6.30 pm Choral Evensong with sermon.



O Jesus, Master Carpenter of Nazareth, who on a Cross with wood and nails has wrought our salvation, wield well your tools in the workshop of your world, so that we, who come to you rough-hewn, may by you be fashioned according to your will; for the sake of your tender mercy. Amen

PREPARING FOR EASTER

"As mad as a March Hare"

This saying comes from the idea that, during the month of March, as the hares recognise the coming of warmer times, they behave oddly, racing around, jumping and 'boxing' other hares.



March 1st is St David's Day.

St David is the Patron Saint of Wales.

David founded a large monastery in West Wales where the monks lived a simple life, prayed for many hours each day and worked very hard in the fields. David was very active in spreading the Christian faith amongst the pagan tribes of the region.

On St David's Day welsh people often wear a daffodil or a leek, both symbols of Wales and many people



celebrate at events called an Eisteddfod that include much singing by choirs, dancing and the reciting of poems.

WORDSEARCH 3

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

CAN YOU FIND THESE WORDS?

ASH, LENT, FASTING, MOTHER,
SPRING, CHICKS, STDAVID,
LAMBS, FLOWERS, HARE,
DAFFODIL, WINDS

CROSS WORD 3

B
E I P L N
R
T
U

How many words can you find having at least 4 letters and using each letter only once. No plurals, No foreign words, no proper nouns.

You must use the centre letter in every word.

There is 1 nine letter word. **15 is average, 20 is good, 25 very good**

30 or more is brilliant!



Answers on page 13

Mothering Sunday is a day when mothers are honoured by their children, often with greetings cards, gifts of flowers or chocolates and perhaps the treat of household tasks being done for them on that day.

The origins of this day come, perhaps, from several different sources...

Mothering Sunday was a day in Lent when the fasting rules were relaxed in honour of the Bible story of the Feeding of the Five Thousand.

Mothering Sunday was the day each year when people would visit their 'mother church', the main local church where each person would have been baptised.

Mothering Sunday was the one day a year when young boys and girls 'in service' were allowed the day off and were able to walk home to visit their mothers.



ST MARYS WALKING GROUP

On 25th January 2020 our group of 12 boarded the 10.00 am number 16 bus from Stourbridge towards Himley. We then used minor roads, a bridleway and footpath to reach the Staffordshire and Worcestershire canal just north of Hinksford. Here we stopped for the traditional cup of mulled wine, a January treat, compliments of Sally and Malcolm. Whilst enjoying our refreshment we were serenaded by a robin singing cheerfully in the nearby shrubbery. Suitably refreshed, we carried on northwards along the canal which we left at Swindon to join a footpath with a steepish climb to the highest point of the walk, about 90 metres! Descending back to the canal we continued to the canalside pub The Round Oak, for lunch. Afterwards we retraced our steps to Giggetty Bridge to access the Wom Brook walk which led us to Wombourne where we caught another number 16 bus back to Stourbridge.

Christine Day

ST MARY'S CHURCH. OLDSWINFORD

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7.30PM

Free admission

Joint retiring collection for the music at

St Mary's, Old Swinford and St Lazar's, Bournville



The COACH HOUSE AGM

will be held on Thursday
26th March 7.30pm
at the Coach House.

TUESDAY TEA AT THE COACH HOUSE

Tuesday Tea at the Coach House appears regularly in the list of events happening in and around St Mary's. Each month John includes it on the pew sheet but you may not know what it is all about.

As the name suggests there is tea to drink and, as is the custom, plenty of cake to accompany it! The idea was started by Ruth Atkinson, a previous curate, and was a bereavement group to help recently bereaved people meet and talk to others in a similar situation.

After Ruth left we didn't have the same contacts and numbers fell. Talking to Stephen Agnew one day when no one else turned up we put forward an idea often expressed by Janice Sutton that the facility should be available to anyone who wished to come along, especially if they were in need of company.

This proved to be exactly what people needed and numbers recovered.

We meet on the third Tuesday of the month upstairs in the Coach House. (There is a lift available.) Our times are from 2 pm until 4pm. This means you can come along any time in those two hours and stay as long as you like.

It would be wonderful if you know of anyone on their own and in need of a good chat or just to be with others who might benefit from joining us one Tuesday.

We look forward to meeting you soon!

**Sue Wakeley
Sylvia Cooper**

YOU SAY MELCHIZEDEK AND I SAY PARDON!

Many people get really anxious about reading in church because of some of the very strange names of places and people in the Bible. The first, and most important piece of advice to remember, is that when it comes to the really difficult names, no-one else is likely to know exactly how they are pronounced either.

However, in most cases, there is a relatively traditional English pronunciation of most names. Very often, the translated English name is quite different from the Hebrew or Greek way of saying the names in the original language. The traditional English is itself simply a time-honoured way of mangling the original, but if you know it, or can find it out, it's certainly worth doing so. If you can't, then you will simply join a long tradition of mangling the pronunciation in your own way. Do your best, and be consistent: don't pronounce the name differently every time it comes up, but in the same way throughout the reading.

How can you find out how the name is normally said, however, so that you don't put any unnecessary obstacles in the way of those listening? There are things that can help. Nowadays the easiest thing is to Google, for example "how to pronounce Melchizedek". You may end up sounding American, of course, but sound or video files for most names are now accessible. (See for example the website www.biblespeak.org.)

A second is to ask someone else: that may be your parish priest, deacon or other minister, lay or ordained. It may also be one of the older members of the congregation: the English tradition of pronouncing names has very often been passed down by osmosis. As people have heard the stories read, they have heard the names pronounced, year by year and have simply absorbed the way – or at least a way – to say them.

There are other things to watch out for as well. An easy trap can be when the same word is pronounced differently depending on whether it is a noun or a verb. We automatically get this right when speaking, but somehow it can be remarkably easy to trip yourself up when reading. An example might be "record": we keep a **REC**ord, but we re**COR**D something. In the Bible, the most obvious example is what prophets do. The verb is prophesy, pronounced prof-ess-**SIGH**; the name of what they say is a prophecy, pronounced **PROF**-ess-see.

There are other words that have unusual spellings and we rarely see them written. On a couple of occasions, I have heard someone stumble after putting St Paul in goal. They have misread the traditional English spelling of “gaol”, whose American spelling “jail” is rather easier to read off the page. St Paul, I am sure, would see himself as more of a striker, and put Jesus in goal: Jesus always saves.

But nearly always, if you make a mistake, you will be the only one who notices it. So trust the Lord, be bold, and follow all those previous generations of English readers who have mangled their words with confidence.

EASTER LILIES



The Church will be decorated for Easter on
Saturday 11 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

TWO GREAT OPPORTUNITIES NOT TO BE MISSED

Will Peart, who, for many years was a chorister at St Mary’s, will be performing an organ recital at St Chad’s Cathedral, Birmingham on 12 March at 7.00 pm. This recital will be part of Will’s final year assessment after studying at the Conservatoire for the past four years. A flyer with full details is available at the back of church.

Another former chorister, Jack Apperley, will be conducting the Birmingham University Women’s Choir in concert at the Elgar hall, Brummall Building, University of Birmingham at 7.30 pm on Friday 13 March. Tickets (£10) available from the University Box Office.

OPPORTUNITIES FOR REFLECTION THIS LENT

This Lententide, Churches Together in Stourbridge have compiled a Lent Study programme as follows. You are welcome to attend some or all of these opportunities. See transport arrangements at the back of church.

Friday 28 February	'Our Father, Who art in Heaven, hallowed be Thy Name, Thy kingdom come.'	Revd Josephine Soon, Amblecote Methodist Church, 4 High Street, Amblecote
Friday 6 March	'Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven'	Stourbridge Quakers, Quakers Meeting house, Scott Road
Friday 13 March	'Give us this day our daily bread.'	Sharon Evans, Amblecote Christian Centre, 102 Brettell Lane
Friday 20 March	'Forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us	Revd Adam Hadley, St Thomas' Church, Market Street
Friday 27 March	'Lead us not into temptation but deliver us from evil'	Revd John Flitcroft, St Mary's Church, Rectory Road
Friday 3 April	'For thine is the kingdom, the power and the glory, for ever and ever.'	Programme of readings and music suggested by the course participants. Venue tbd

Within the parish there will be two further meetings to explore together the deepening of prayer and discipleship. These will be in the Rectory for a half-day on Saturday 7 March and in the evening of 18 March. Again, details are on display at the back of church.

PLEASE PRAY FOR

Churches Together in Stourbridge

Please pray for our Fairtrade team of volunteers. Stourbridge is a Fairtrade town because of CTiS. Pray for the team during Fairtrade Fortnight (24th February—8th March); and for CTiS Secretary and Co-ordinator, Graham Brazier.

Answers to Cross Words 4

BLIP, **BLUEPRINT**, BURP, ERUPT, INEPT, INPUT, LUPIN, LUPINE, PELT, PENT, PENULT, PERI, PERIL, PERT, PIER, PILE, PINE, PINT, PLEB, PLIER, PRINT, PRUNE, PUNIER, PUNT, PUNTER, PURE, PURINE, PURL, RIPE, RIPEN, TRIP, TRIPE, TRIPLE, TULIP, TURNIP, UNRIP, UNRIPE

CONGRATULATIONS IF YOU FOUND MORE

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

At our February meeting eighteen members enjoyed a talk by John Hill on the origin, development and current activity of a group called 'Side By Side' which develops activities and skills in performing arts. These include mime, singing, dance, film making, acting and puppetry for, and by young people with special needs.

Changes in their care were directed and incorporated into national education including schools, colleges and special schools rather than the Health Service. Eventually changes in policies, priorities or strain on resources meant tutors or special volunteer groups were needed to supplement quality art activities and Side By Side was formed.

Each year a special performance of very high standard is performed in Stourbridge Town Hall by the group. It has also been at the Edinburgh Fringe, in Sweden and the Czech Republic.

The group rehearsed at New Road Methodist Church, Baptist Church and Elton Centre but in 2018 the trustees realised that the group needed its own facilities for rehearsal and storage. They have now acquired St John's Church located between the fire station and the bus station and they have completely refurbished it for use. The group moved into it in January 2020. Having originally started with 4 students they now have 70 from a wide area.

The next production, Alice in Otherland, will be in Stourbridge Town Hall from 17th to 20th June 2020. Come and see this amazing company!

Next Meeting: Tuesday, 10th March at 2.15 pm at the Coach House. Lent meditation and Wave of Prayer with Rev John Flitcroft All are welcome.

Dawn Nex

LETTER FROM THE DEAN OF WORCESTER

Peter Atkinson



This year the whole of March falls within Lent. That makes it too late to talk about Ash Wednesday and how we should be keeping Lent, and too early to talk about Easter, the great day for which Lent is the time of preparation. So instead, let's remind ourselves that the word 'Lent' is an old English word simply meaning 'spring'. In other languages, the word for Lent refers to the forty days (such as the French Carême) or the season of fasting (such as the German Fastenzeit). Our language invites us to ponder the fact that Lent and Easter occur in the spring.

The connection to new life and rebirth is obvious. As the natural world comes back to life, as leaves and flowers appear, as animals come out of hibernation, as the days lengthen and we spend more time out of doors, so too Christians celebrate the new spiritual life that flows from the dying and rising of Our Lord Jesus Christ.

In St John's Gospel, Jesus compares his own death and resurrection to the planting of a seed: 'Truly, truly, I say to you, unless a grain of wheat falls into the earth and dies, it remains alone; but if it dies, it bears much fruit. Now, when I am lifted up from the earth, I will draw all people to myself' (John 12: 24, 32). He is the seed, buried in the earth, but raised up in glory, extending his risen life to all who follow him.

In the natural world, plants produce more seeds, which in turn produce more plants. So too the followers of Jesus are not only the 'fruit' of Jesus's death and resurrection, we are that new generation of seeds which must be planted in order to bear more fruit. Each Christian life is a life of dying and rising. Each Christian life replicates the pattern of Christ's dying and rising.

'We die with him', says St Paul, 'in order that we may live with him'. How do we 'die'? We die to self, we die to selfish and self-destructive instincts, we die to all that separates us from Christ. And how do we 'live'? We gratefully remember the promise of Jesus that he has come that we may have life, and may have it in all its fullness. We allow the risen life of Christ to live in us.

THE WONDERFUL RESPONSE TO THE DAMAGED WINDOWS

The sad incident of deliberate vandalism that caused so much damage to one of the windows on the south side of the church has resulted in the most remarkable and reassuring reaction from so many local people.

The cost of repair is considerable and the process complex. Our Master of Fabric has been very active in seeking the necessary quotations and advice as to how repairs can be best effected rapidly and correctly. The insurance company has responded with advice and we now have a date for the damaged window to be removed for the repairs to be carried out.

The response to this incident by the congregation and very many other members of our local community has been nothing short of fantastic.. This has been a most unsettling incident but it has become one that has proved the saying that every cloud has a silver lining.

The Coffee Morning held on Saturday 8th of February proved to be a very great success, an enjoyable event that attracted very large numbers of visitors. As always, at any such St Mary's occasion, tea, coffee and cakes were present in plenty and a wonderful atmosphere was created by all those who came to share their support. The ladies who organized the event did so in support of raising funds to cover the costs of repairs.

Although unable to be present personally due to long-standing family commitments many miles away, Judy and I have received nothing but positive and encouraging reports of the occasion. The fellowship, the concern for and by our wider community and the strength of the wish to do something to put right such a horrible wrong has been remarkable. From a morning of shared enjoyment and expression of unity has come the product of everyone's efforts, the result of over £500 being raised on the day, a most amazingly generous sum. With on-line donations and other gifts from well-wishers something in the region of £1500 has been raised towards the cost of repairs. Truly, a fantastic response.

Thank you to everyone who organised and supported these appeals. Thank you for your support, thank you for your generosity, and thank you for your concern.

The Churchwardens

Huge thanks and congratulations to the staff and pupils of Oldswinford Primary School who sang hymns on the playground at 3.00pm on Friday 14th February to help raise funds for our window appeal. It was wonderful to see so many families present in support of these kind and considerate children.

We are grateful for the sponsorship of the following businesses



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