

**ST MARY'S OLD SWINFORD
MONTHLY NEWS
NOVEMBER 2020
ONLINE EDITION**

ST MARY'S OLD SWINFORD MONTHLY NEWS NOVEMBER 2020

50p



RECTOR

The Rev'd John Flitcroft
The Rectory
Old Swinford
Stourbridge DY8 2HA

Tel: 01384 395410

E-mail: st.mary.os.priest@btconnect.com

Clergy day off Friday

CONTACTS

Reader:	Mr Roger King	379800
Church Wardens:	Mrs Judy Hall	377349
Director of Music:	Mr James Bradley	07973 934177
PCC Secretary:	Miss Katey Fletcher	378182
Monthly News Editor:	Mrs Annette Sibley	
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:		441003

*John Sutton's hours of work are: Day off – Monday,
Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday 9.00am - 1.00pm, Friday 9.00am - 12 noon.*

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, BANNS OF MARRIAGE, BAPTISMS by
phone or email to Rev'd John Flitcroft or Mr John Sutton.**

PARISH REGISTER

Baptisms:

11th October Ivie-Leigh Wight

Funerals

8.10.2020 Dr Christopher Peacock Aged 55

25.10.2020 Cynthia Taylor—burial of cremated remains

26.10.2020 Audrey Bull—burial of cremated remains

26.10.2020 Margaret Casey Aged 89

QR codes are displayed, to use with the NHS Test and Trace app, outside church and the church hall.

Service rota for November 2020

DATE	DAY	CLERGY LEADING	WARDEN	STEWARDS	ZOOM MANAGER	READER	INTERCESIONS	BELL RINGERS	NOTES
1.11.20	10.00am All Saints/All Souls	JF Preach RK	Tony Tatford	Avril and Stan Williams, Sue Tatford	Colin Roberts	Stan Williams	Roger King	John & Stephen	Service in church which will be live streamed
1.11.20	6.30pm All Souls	JF Preach JF	Judy Hall	Richard Hall & Chris & Adam McCullagh	John Sutton			Ray & Jean	Service in church which will be live streamed
3.11.20	Evening prayer (2)	JF + MF							On Zoom and Facebook only.
5.11.20	Thursday Holy Communion BCP in church and live streamed	JF Preach RK		Sue Waleley & Elaine Buchan	John Sutton	Marjorie Ferguson			Service in church which will be live streamed
8.11.20	10.00am 3 rd Remembrance Sunday	JF Preach JF	Malcolm Frost	Sally Frost, Gill Davies and Barbara Grainger	Ben supported by John Sutton	Gill Davies	Peter Thompson	Tony and George	Service in church which will be live streamed
10.11.20	Evening prayer (3)	JF + MF							On Zoom and Facebook only.
12.11.20	Thursday Holy Communion BCP in church and live streamed	TBA		Chris McCullagh & Sue Waleley	Les Timms	Roger King			Service in church which will be live streamed
15.11.20	10.00am 2 nd Sunday before Advent	JF Preach RK	Judy Hall	Richard Hall & Chris & Adam McCullagh	Les Timms & Ben	Richard Hall	John Sutton	Ray, Jean & Chris D	Service in church which will be live streamed
19.11.20	Thursday Holy Communion BCP in church and live streamed	TBA		Elaine Buchan & Chris McCullagh	Colin Roberts				Service in church which will be live streamed
22.11.20	10.00am Christ The King	TBA	Malcolm Frost	Sally Frost Merl Roberts & Barbara Grainger	Colin Roberts	Jill Finney		John & Stephen	Service in church which will be live streamed
24.11.20	Evening Prayer (4)	JF + MF							On Zoom and Facebook only
26.11.20	Thursday Holy Communion BCP in church and live streamed	JF Preach JF		Sue Waleley & Elaine Buchan	John Sutton				Service in church which will be live streamed
29.11.20	10.00am Advent Sunday	JF Preach JF	Tony Tatford	Sue Tatford + Stan and Avril Williams	Ben & John Sutton	Joan Ram	Roger King	Tony & George	Service in church which will be live streamed

FROM THE RECTORY



Dear Friends,

As I write, the latest attempt by government to suppress the spread of coronavirus is about to be launched. By the time you read this perhaps we'll know the degree to which the attempt has been successful. Perhaps! Newspaper headline writers, who can't resist a pun and who seem sometimes to prefer the drama of failure to the hopefulness of success, use the latest guidance to suggest we're going backwards. 'It all ends in tiers' reads one, 'Johnson leaves us in tiers' reads another. So, if we're not in another, fuller lockdown by the time you read this, we may still be 'in tiers'.

One of the saddest things about the reporting of this 'second wave' of the virus is the portrayal of a breakdown in the unity to which we were all witnesses at the start of the pandemic. Although there were divisions, not least over the panic-buying from supermarkets which left some key-workers unable to shop, there was, I think, a strong sense that we would get through the lockdown more successfully if we were able to travel that hard road together. It has been reported, for example, that public generosity in giving to foodbanks was notably higher at the start of the outbreak than when the restrictions began to be eased.

What is a Christian response in times like these? In his Letter to the Romans, St Paul urges solidarity: 'Rejoice with those who rejoice, weep with those who weep. Live in harmony with one another.' And: 'Each of us must please our neighbour for the good purpose of building up the neighbour.' This, I believe, is the distinctively Christian path. Rowan Williams has described the 'slogan' of the Church's life as 'not without the other: no I without a you, no I without a we'. This is the meaning of the words 'compassion' and 'congratulation': compassion is literally 'suffering with' and 'con-gratulation': 'rejoicing with'.

As the Church we believe the 'other' to be the unique gift God has given us to live with. A further definition of the Church, from William Temple, shows that, before anything else, we are for our communities: 'The Church', he said, 'is the only institution which exists primarily for the benefit of those who are not yet its members.'

Whenever we serve, we serve one another to God's glory. Whenever we show solidarity with those who are suffering we reveal God in the world. Whenever we do that which builds up our neighbour we follow Jesus who described love of our neighbour as the revelation of God's love for us.

Whatever may be the measures put forward to tackle the virus, we can work with them to show God is for us and with us. And, whenever we do that, we won't leave anyone alone in their tiers.

Rev'd John



TONY TATFORD CHURCHWARDEN 2012-2020

At last month's much-delayed APCM, Tony Tatford, our long-standing churchwarden was finally able to relinquish his role. The following is a brief tribute to Tony in recognition and celebration of eight years of dedicated service:

Tony Tatford was the first person Mary and I met when we visited St Mary's on a November weekend before interviews for the post of Rector. Although we didn't realise it at the time, we had arrived on a scene the like of which was commonplace in this church. The doors were open on a Saturday afternoon and Tony was atop a ladder fixing some elaborate, invisible line for a decoration of some sort. (I think it was for Christmas). Judy was also around. As complete strangers we were welcomed warmly and Tony answered our questions about the church fully and very generously, (especially as he couldn't have known our hidden motives in asking them).

Tony has always shown that same generosity and kindness, and not just to people like Mary and I lucky enough to be part of the worshipping congregation. I've seen Tony being just as kind and gentle to people in very different circumstances, prepared to see the best in those whom other people might disregard or disdain.

Since becoming Churchwarden in 2012, amongst all his other duties, Tony has made a considerable difference to the care of St Mary's churchyard. He has arranged regular maintenance from community group Muddy Boots, who work with adults with special needs and liaises with the community payback team on their work. Tony has recently completed a new set of regulations specific to St Mary's churchyard which will greatly help incumbents with churchyard decisions and disputes. He can also often be found cutting back trees and shrubs, picking up litter or just chatting with some of the many people who use the graveyard.

Never one to ignore a need, Tony took over the editorship of this magazine when Alec Beevers died and no-one else was available to do it. He also steps in when John Sutton is away and prints the pewsheets. Along with the rest of a dedicated team, Tony, (with Sue) has been hand-delivering pewsheets each week during the lockdown.

Not long after we arrived Tony told me that he planned to step down in April at the APCM and let someone else take on the rewarding task of churchwarden. It is typical of him, that, when the APCM was unavoidably delayed by the pandemic, he continued to serve as churchwarden as faithfully, vigorously and conscientiously as ever before. Thank you Tony!

We pray for you every best wish in the challenges you take on as President of Stourbridge Rotary and we thank you for all you have done and will still do for St Mary's.

Rev'd John

THE MOST POPULAR BIBLE VERSES

BibleGateway listed the most viewed or searched-for Bible verses for 2019. As it happens, five of the top ten verses were from Psalm 23, demonstrating the Psalm's popularity, not only among Christians, but perhaps also among those who hear the Psalm at funerals or other events within the Church. If you added up all the usage percentages, Psalm 23 would be the most popular Bible passage of 2019 on this largely web-based platform. If we only give one mention to Psalm 23, then the most popular Bible verses were:

1. **John 3:16** For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life.
2. **Jeremiah 29:11** For I know the plans I have for you," declares the Lord, "plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future.
3. **Philippians 4:13** I can do all this through him who gives me strength.
4. **Psalm 23:4** Even though I walk through the darkest valley, I will fear no evil, for you are with me; your rod and your staff, they comfort me. (The other verses from this Psalm were 6, 5, 1 and 10.)
5. **Romans 8:28** And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose.
6. **Romans 2:2**: Do not conform to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is - his good, pleasing and perfect will.
7. **Matthew 6:33** But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well.

8. **Isaiah 41:10** So do not fear, for I am with you; do not be dismayed, for I am your God. I will strengthen you and help you; I will uphold you with my righteous right hand.

9. **Philippians 4:6** Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God.

10. **John 14:6** Jesus answered, "I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me.

Is your favourite verse included here?

POTATO AND FENNEL BAKE (SERVES 4-6)

If you don't want to use fennel you can use carrots instead. It's a good dish if you want to get ahead. Assemble it a few hours before you need it and just pop it in the oven to bake when needed. Great with a Sunday roast.

50g butter plus a little more for greasing the dish
2 large fennel bulbs
600g large potatoes peeled and cut into wedges
2 garlic cloves crushed
50g grated parmesan cheese

Butter a shallow large ovenproof dish.

Trim the fennel and cut each bulb in half through the root then cut each half into 3 wedges through the root.

Boil the fennel for 5 mins, add the potatoes and boil for a further 5 mins. Drain and dry well and arrange in the buttered dish.

Put the 50g of butter and the garlic in a small pan and gently melt. Pour over the fennel and potatoes in the dish.

Sprinkle with the parmesan cheese.

Bake in a pre-heated oven 200C/180 fan for about 40 mins until cooked and golden brown.

Ann Jennings

THANKING GOD FOR THE PAST AS WE LOOK TO THE FUTURE.

November is an emotional month. It begins with All Saints Day when we thank God for all the Saints who have gone before us – the Roman Catholic Church recognises more than 10,000 Christians who have been considered worthy of the Saint (with a capital ‘s’) title after their death. The next day is All Souls, traditionally called the Commemoration of All the Faithful Departed or the Day of the Dead. Many Christian denominations mark this with a day of prayer and remembrance for the souls of those who have died, as St Mary’s Church does. During such a service candles are lit for every person who has died as their names are read out. It can be a very moving, meaningful and emotional occasion for many people.

A few days later, on Armistice Day, the nation comes together to remember and give thanks to God for all those who sacrificed their lives while serving the country in the armed forces. Armistice Day was first observed at 11am on 11 November 1919 throughout the British Commonwealth to commemorate the armistice agreement that ended the First World War a year earlier. This happened at the eleventh hour of the eleventh day of the eleventh month of 1918. The first official Armistice Day commemoration was held in the grounds of Buckingham Palace and this was followed by a peace parade for which the Cenotaph memorial was created in Whitehall and today is at the centre of the nation’s commemorations.

During the Second World War, most of the Commonwealth of Nations agreed to change the name from Armistice to Remembrance and so include those who died during that war. In more recent times, servicemen and women killed and injured in other conflicts since the Second World War have also been included, and services are held at parish churches and local memorials on the closest Sunday to Armistice Day.

The Royal British Legion, which cares for ex-servicemen and women injured while serving the country, and for the families of those who have died, plays a leading role in many of the services which often attract the largest congregations of the year. However, this year, for the first time since 1919, these services will probably not be taking place in the usual ways because of the Covid-19 pandemic.

As November starts with a series of acts of remembrance to thank God for all those who have gone before us, it concludes with the excitement of Advent Sunday when Christians begin looking forward to celebrating the coming into the world of Christ. Advent Sunday marks the start of a new liturgical year for the Christian Church, a year that we hope and pray will enable the world to come to terms with Covid-19 and enable us all not only to rebuild our local communities, but make our churches stronger and more relevant to the new world we will be serving.

A prayer for all time?

This wartime prayer is taken from the 'Field Service Book of the British Army'.

Almighty God, in you alone we find safety and peace. We commend to your gracious keeping all the men and women who serve in the Navy, the Army or the Air Force, who face danger and put their lives at risk so that others might live in safety. Defend them day by day by your heavenly power; and help them to know that they can never pass beyond the reach of your care. Keep alive in them and in us your vision of that peace which alone we must seek and serve; Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Almighty God, in you alone we find safety and peace. We commend to your gracious keeping all the men and women who are working at the front line of the Covid-19 pandemic, who face danger and put their lives at risk so that others might live in safety. Defend them day by day by your heavenly power; and help them to know that they can never pass beyond the reach of your care. Keep alive in them and in us your vision of that peace which alone we must seek and serve; Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Sally Churchus

A HEALING AND SUSTAINING CHURCH

You'll be hearing the words 'healthy and sustainable churches' a lot in our diocesan life at the moment. As we navigate the challenges of the pandemic and seek to be a faithful Christian presence, we want as many church communities as possible to be healthy and sustainable - in other words, alive and kicking now and for the foreseeable future!



We know this is not just our work. It is God's Church, as it is his mission, of which we are a part and in which we share. It's not all up to us, and isn't that liberating! So our first call is to keep faith in the God who keeps faith in us.

Being healthy and sustainable are not ends in themselves, just as the Church does not exist for itself alone. William Temple famously said we are the only organisation which exists for those who are not our members. Jesus told his disciples: 'As the Father has sent me, I send you'. In other words, they had a job to do, which was to live the life of Jesus and reflect the glory of the Father's Kingdom. And so do we have a job to do, not by preaching at everybody all the time nor by trying to be God, but simply by reflecting his love, compassion, justice and freedom by being who we are.

This is why I pray for a humble church which is healing and sustaining for itself, its community and the world around. This is the sort of church which attracts me just as much now as it did when I first answered the call to priesthood. It is a church which is world-facing and life-affirming, a church with fuzzy boundaries, confident in knowing that we are not God, but content with letting God be God, and discovering what that might mean for us!

This pandemic has changed so much in our lives, but many of the basics remain. We have a pretty good idea of what it takes for communities and individuals to flourish. We recognise the behaviours which are life-giving, just as we know those which undermine our common humanity. These things haven't changed, and neither has our Christian calling to fulfil the biblical imperative to love as we are loved. In the words of a former bishop of Worcester it is still a case of 'alleluia and on we go. 'So, what does it take for a church to be healing and sustaining? What do you think such a church will look like?

Robert Jones

Archdeacon of Worcester

READERS

Five people from parishes across the Diocese have been admitted to the office of Readers in Worcester Cathedral. Bishop John conducted the service, licensing the individuals to minister in the parishes they have been called to serve.



Readers are trained and licensed lay ministers in the Church of England authorised in particular to exercise a ministry of preaching and teaching. They undergo a two-year training course before being admitted to the role, which ends with the award of a Certificate in Higher Education by the University of Durham. After being licensed they carry out a wide range of tasks within their parishes and beyond, especially helping others to reflect on their faith and how it relates to their daily lives. Those admitted and licensed were:

- Sue Hiscocks who will serve in the benefice of Fladbury, Hill and Moor, Wyre Piddle, Cropthorne and Charlton
- Alison Lewis who will serve at St Leonard, Clent
- Charles Morgan who will serve in the Halas Team in Halesowen
- Yuki Johnson from Redditch also completed the training with the group, but will be licensed in London where she will work with a Japanese language congregation. She was welcomed as a new Reader as part of the service.

The preacher at the service was Canon Sue Oliver, Warden of Readers, who said the new Lay Ministers should “proclaim the Kingdom of love, compassion, justice and freedom, just as Jesus did; by how [they] live, teach and meet people wherever they are. And make sure to keep connected to Jesus through prayer, which will sustain life and ministry.”

The service took place in Worcester Cathedral on the afternoon of Saturday 19 September

NEWS OF MARK

2020 has seen the world humbled by the virus. There is so much to overcome to return to 'near normal' and how we long for it! You will like to know of Mark and how they are getting on in Sri Lanka, in these strange times - Mark's school also closed when lockdown was introduced in March. Once the government knew it was a long process ahead, lessons were broadcast on television. Mark was also given an old computer and he was able to study online. Fortunately there were not many fatalities covid wise in his area as well as the whole country. Hence schools have reopened and currently mock OL exams are on at his school. He is therefore quite busy preparing and sitting these exams. OL exams begin on January 18th 2021. Mark gets tuition in maths, english and science - I am told he is doing well. Like all sixteen year olds, his mind tends to wander sometimes, education wise, life has returned to near normal. They must wear face mask at school and follow social distance etc. Games and group events are still on hold. Mark's mother Sasi is keeping well. She makes face-masks which are much in demand in the village. Mum and son join a coach to attend church every first Sunday of the month. They worship at the Tabernacle Church, Atchuveli (a suburb) which is 20 km away from their home. They think of us and feel sad at the enormity of deaths and feared second wave in the UK. They send their love to you.

Kanthi Ariaraj

OTHER NEWS

We are now able to make contributions again to the Stourbridge Foodbank through the donation of food or you may still wish to give financially in lieu of food. If you visit their website at <https://www.blackcountryfoodbank.org.uk/support/how-to-donate/> you can see the various ways in which you can give. Or you can send a cheque payable to Black Country Foodbank to Mrs Jen Coleman, Black Country Foodbank, Albion Street, Brierley Hill. DY5 3EE.

You might like to try using one of the many prayer apps which are available. The Jesuit app 'Pray as you Go' is very good – and free! You can find it by pasting this link into a smartphone or computer browser: <https://pray-as-you-go.org/>

WORCESTER CATHEDRAL

On Saturday 21 November the cathedral is inviting boys aged between 6 and 10 to come and 'Be a chorister for an afternoon', with an opportunity for girls aged between 10 and 15 to attend a similar event on Saturday 23 January 2021.

This is a perfect opportunity for budding young singers to come and find out more, have a go at singing in the choir, and join in with singing a service at the cathedral. There'll be plenty of information for potential recruits and their families, and a chance to meet key cathedral staff, the current choristers, and their families. All activities will be run fully in line with the latest COVID-19 guidance for places of worship, and the performing arts.

Most of all, being a chorister for an afternoon will be great fun, and we hope all who take part will enjoy finding out what being a chorister is really like. Booking is essential - for more information, or to reserve a place, please contact Director of Music, Samuel Hudson, on samuelhudson@worcestercathedral.org.uk

MONEYWISE
Free Training Session

Is money causing you stress?
Do you want to understand your spending habits and learn how to make it safely from one payday to the next?
Do you need help with budgeting and to learn the stress free way to manage your money?

Session 1 Tuesday 20th Oct – 10am – 12.30pm
Session 2 Tuesday 3rd Nov – 10am – 12.30pm
Session 3 Tuesday 10th Nov – 10am – 12.30pm

To register contact us:
Web: <https://lifecentredebtadvice.org.uk/contactus.php>
Tel: 01384 739757
Email: info@lifecentredebtadvice.org.uk

Life Centre Debt Advice
The Upper Room
Bellmark House
18a Market Street
Stourbridge
DY8 1AD

MAKING IT HAPPEN!
Supported by Dudley Council
Innovation Fund

cma
Freedom from debt
Hope for the future

We are grateful for the sponsorship of the following businesses



Rachel Clark Chiropodist
Fully qualified and registered with the Health Professions Council CH17310
Visiting Chiropodist - professional footcare in the comfort of your home - 20 years experience
For an appointment call
01384 873938 or 07860771442

Chris Genner
FOREVER LIVING PRODUCTS
Natural Aloe Vera health drinks, beauty and nutritional products.
Free advice, samples, talks and demonstrations.
BUY DIRECT www.genner.net



H. PORTER & SONS
INDEPENDENT FUNERAL DIRECTORS
Funeral Directors for over 160 years
H. PORTER & SONS
Old Church House,
60 South Road, Stourbridge,
West Midlands, DY8 3UJ
01384 395048
www.hporter.co.uk

170 YEARS
1843 - 2013



Slimming[®] WORLD
Touching hearts, changing lives
No hunger,
No pills,
No potions,
Just real food!
Want to find out more? Come along to a session with no obligation to join..... **WEDNESDAYS 9.30am** at Pedmore Cricket Club 3.45pm, 5.30pm, 7.30pm at St Mary's Church Hall, Reduced rate for Seniors and Students....Call Kerry on **07812 055665 / 01384 833812**

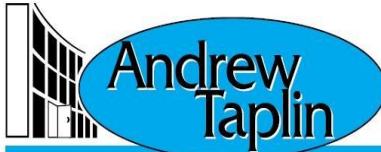
Home is where the care is
Home Care from Bluebird care
Email the Bluebird Care team to find out more about our home care service.
Dudley@bluebirdcare.co.uk
Or call us on **01384 297839**
bluebirdcare.co.uk/dudley



J. Vernon Kendrick
Funeral Directors
Vernon House Cemetery Road Lye DY9 8PB
01384 422123
Greenfield House 11 Greenfield Avenue
Stourbridge DY8 1SU
01384 442111
A positive philosophy of care

Davis Memorials Ltd
Monumental and Masonry Contractors
Established 1841 Suppliers of all forms of memorials.
56A Station Road, Old Hill, Cradley Heath,
West Midlands, B64 6NU
Tel: 01384 566958 Fax: 01384 569708
Website www.davismemorialsLtd.co.uk

Swinford Pharmacy
90 Hagley Road, Old Swinford.
Tel: 01384 440030. We offer a free collection and delivery service for elderly and housebound patients.



**CHARTERED SURVEYORS . VALUERS
AND ESTATE AGENTS**
**14 HAGLEY ROAD, STOURBRIDGE,
WEST MIDLANDS DY8 1PS**
TEL: 01384 440466 FAX: 01384 440282