

ST MARY'S OLD SWINFORD

FEBRUARY 2021



RECTOR

The Rev'd John Flitcroft
The Rectory
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Clergy day off Friday

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*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: No Baptisms have taken place

Funerals :

4.11.20	Joyce Myatt	Aged 96
6.11.20	Joyce Hipkiss	Aged 95
9.11.20	Joyce Faux	Aged 96
22.11.20	Bruce Giles	Aged 90
27.11.20	Elaine Pickersgill	Aged 82
14.12.20	Bob Stinton	Aged 91

Services during February will be:

Wednesday 3	7.30pm Service of Compline—Zoom only
Thursday 4	10.30am Holy Communion BCP
Sunday 7	10.00am Parish Communion
Wednesday 10	7.30pm Service of Compline—Zoom only
Thursday 11	10.30am Holy Communion BCP
Sunday 14	10.00am Parish Communion
Wednesday 17	7.30pm Ash Wednesday Service
Thursday 18	10.30am Holy Communion BCP
Sunday 21	10.00am Parish Communion
Thursday 25	10.30am Holy Communion BCP
Sunday 28	10.00am Parish Communion

It will not be possible for congregations to attend at the church premises for these services. However, all services, apart from the two services of Compline on a Wednesday evening, will be broadcast online through Zoom and Facebook Live. Please contact us for the meeting number and password for our services on Zoom.

Information about changes to services will be posted on St Mary's website, St Mary's Facebook, and sent by email. If you would like to join the email list please contact John Sutton.

FROM THE RECTORY



Dear Friends,

When the first national 'lockdown' was ordered in March last year I think few would have predicted that Covid restrictions might still be affecting us in the second half of 2021! Today, as I write this, Stourbridge lies under a blanket of that far more traditional harbinger of delay, disruption and separation - the snow. This Sunday has seen a significant fall on top of Saturday's glorious sunlit snow scene. Certainly the roads are quieter today than I've heard them at any time since the first lockdown. Most likely, by the time you read this, the snow will have gone but the restrictions due to the pandemic will still be with us. I am sure I am not the only one slightly nostalgic for the days when snow was the only thing likely to shut schools and churches!

The snow highlights one benefit of our enforced use of online worship – there are perhaps many of us who, today, would have been unable to join in worship at all if the only way of doing so had been physically to travel to the church building. I am keenly aware that not all have equal access to the technology that enables online worship; every Sunday we miss many who either have been prevented from joining us through lack of devices or for whom virtual services are so alien or uncongenial that they would rather wait until physical worship resumes. But there are many too for whom online worship has brought real comfort and fellowship and for whom it has enabled a kind of communion they have otherwise missed.

This crisis has accelerated change in many, many ways. Much of that change has been, and will continue to be, deeply unwelcome and damaging. As a church and a worshipping community, I think we have a task ahead of *lamentation* on behalf of all those who are suffering loss: the loss of loved ones, health or livelihoods, the loss of connection or confidence, the loss of opportunities for education, work or sharing in significant events. Lament is perhaps an unfamiliar aspect of our Biblical tradition and yet is deep rooted in that tradition and in our faith. The Psalms in particular allow human grief and anger to form part of the conversation with God. And St Paul talks of how, when we don't know how to pray, 'the Holy Spirit groans within us' as we ourselves groan with all Creation. Lamentation is perhaps the best response we can make when confronted by suffering on the scale of the Pandemic or by demands from others to know 'why?' N.T Wright has written this about lament in the context of COVID 19:

It is no part of the Christian vocation, then, to be able to explain what's happening and why. In fact, it *is* part of the Christian vocation *not to be able* to explain—and to lament instead. As the Spirit laments within us, so we become, even in our self-isolation, small shrines where the presence and healing love of God can dwell. And out of that there can emerge new possibilities, new acts of kindness, new scientific understanding, new hope.

As another season of Lent approaches in which our normal patterns of worship, fellowship and communion will be curtailed or disrupted, perhaps we can react to the loss with heartfelt, shared lament and a fresh desire to continue to seek new ways to know God through prayer, service and shared love.
God Bless You

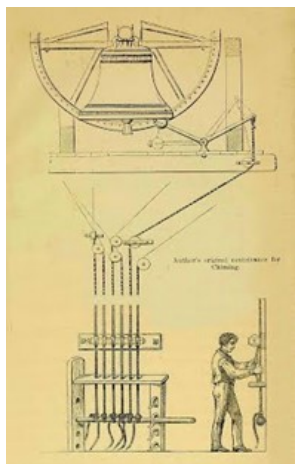
Rev'd John

BELL RINGERS' CORNER

A Short History of the Ellacombe Ringing Apparatus

You may have been aware of the tuneful chiming of our church bells that has been taking place recently as the Old Swinford ringers gain expertise in the use of our carillon.

This device had not been used for many years until Ray and Jean Drew spent many hours working on the carillon to bring it back into use. The mechanism has been overhauled and new ropes fitted so that it is now in good working order.



A little research has established that our device is a fine example of Rev'd Ellacombe's Ringing Apparatus. It was invented in 1821.

Rev'd Henry Thomas Ellacombe (1790-1885) invented his 'Ringing Apparatus' in 1821 and installed it in his parish of Bitton in Gloucestershire in 1822. It is said that he devised his mechanism so that all the bells could be rung by one trusted person without having to rely on a band of unruly and drunken ringers!

I am glad to report that behaviour in the ringing room has much improved since that deplored by the Rev'd Ellacombe in the nineteenth century. The impetus now has not been so much Old John Barleycorn as young Johnny Covid and his social distancing requirements.

Many parishes had Ellacombe frames installed during the nineteenth century but sadly a lot of churches have now had the apparatus removed. There are often still visible holes in the ceilings of these ringing rooms where the ropes would have passed through and frames still installed but with no ropes attached.

On Saturday 26th June 2021 a worldwide celebration is planned for the 200th anniversary of Rev'd Henry Thomas Ellacombe's invention of his ringing apparatus. This will be focused on St Mary's Church, Bitton, where the chiming frame was first installed.

Stephen Howard

FINANCE ROLE

Sensory People are seeking Finance Support. We are looking for someone who is able to offer us an efficient service, will work from home and manage our immediate day-to-day accounts, banking and invoicing procedures and is familiar with basic financial software (e.g. QuickBooks). In turn we will offer you support and opportunities for development as they arise.

We are a young, local and expanding charity supporting children with Sensory Processing Disorders and their families (such as those with Autism, ADHD, Dyspraxia) We are specialists trained in Sensory Integration Therapy and work in Stourbridge, Romsley and Erdington. With an increasing number of funding grants and families supported by our services we are looking for expert support, someone who will work independently and enjoy being part of a team for a flexible number of hours per week or month accordingly.

We would welcome your enquiry - please call Marion on 07879 431371 for further information. For further information on our charity please see our website www.sensory-people.co.uk Applications should be forwarded in the form of a letter and CV to Marion Rogerson info@sensory-people.co.uk.

RECOLLECTIONS OF A ST MARY'S CHOIRBOY

I will be 80 next year and am currently compiling a Storyboard of my life. On reflection, my time as a choirboy contributed significantly to my early development and through to later life.

I was born at 29 Grange Road, on the Grange Estate in Oldswinford on 27th August 1941, about a six minute walk to St Mary's. My Dad Harry worked at Eveson's Factory near Lye railway station as a tool setter for an enamel pots and pans production line. He was married to May, (nee Taylor), from Lye, who also worked on the Eveson production line.

I went to Oldswinford Cof E Primary school in the old Victorian building in Oldswinford and having failed my 11plus went on to Grange Secondary Modern School.

Choirboy

In 1948, aged 8, my great pal from next door Malcolm Mills and I decided to join the choir. Neither of our families were church goers and why we joined I can't remember. Sadly Malcolm passed away last year.

The choir was 16 + boys and 8 – 10 men. The choir-master was Donald Lambert and I see from the records he was organist and choirmaster for 50 plus years. He ran the local hardware store at Oldswinford Cross, which is now a petrol station.

We were paid as choirboys and every three months we would queue up in the vestry to collect our quarterly fees – my recollection was that it was in the range from £2 to 10 shillings. Other payments were for weddings and funerals - half a crown – 2s 6d or 12.5p in today's money. There were some other perks. After Harvest Festival we shared the apples between us – they were all in little piles and we selected our pile in choir seniority order. The main perk was the annual choir outing on Samuel Johnson's charabanc to Porthcawl, Weston super Mare or Rhyl. Most of the boys rarely had such outings and it was great fun – racing crabs along the back seat of the coach on the way home. The outing was funded by the two head boys knocking on the doors of the large houses mainly in Pedmore asking for sponsorship money for the outing.

The pay was well earned as we had three choir practices a week: one hour sessions on Monday and Friday evenings and on Sunday before morning service with the men. The other boys I can remember in the choir were Roger Westwood, Clive ?? and Michael Bridge.

Mr. Lambert was a very accomplished musician and organist and we performed some very demanding anthems. I can still sing sections of Handel's Messiah and Stainer's Crucifixion from memory and learned to read music in the process. There were three or four good male voices in the choir, especially Keith ?? Other members I recall are Howard Farmer, who was landlord of the Crown and had been in the choir for 60 years, Harold Raybould and his son, George Hazeldene and his son, Summers, Charlie ??. One summer we were invited to provide the choir for a Sunday service at Worcester Cathedral. I remember we had limited funds so they hired a working man's double decker and all the seats were very greasy.

On reflection the choir gave me a love of classical music which has stayed with me. At home we had no access to music or books but we had the most caring and lovely parents. Unknown to me the choir also provided the foundation from which my faith grew. Thank you, St Mary Church, for those boyhood foundation experiences.

Martin Waldron



Choir annual outing to Monmouth



Wedding choristers



LENT—AN ARTICLE BY BISHOP JOHN

It might feel as though we have been in the season of Lent for a very long time. Because of the pandemic we weren't able to celebrate Easter properly last year and the remainder of the year had a distinctly penitential feel to it, as has the first part of 2021.

There has been so much sadness, grief and loss during these past few months and we shall be living with the consequences of COVID-19 for years to come. My hope and my prayer, though, is that not all of those consequences will be bad.

Lent is the time for us to turn our faces towards Jerusalem and prepare to follow our Lord on the way of the cross. We do that knowing that out of crucifixion, God brought resurrection. That is the Christian pattern of things – God's redemption involves bringing good out of bad, joy out of pain, new life out of death.

After the resurrection Peter wanted to go back to fishing. It was what was familiar to him and he felt he could find comfort in that. But God was calling him to something much more exciting.

It would be a sadness for us to try to go back to the way things were before the pandemic, just as it would have been for Peter simply to resume his life as a fisherman. Like Peter, I believe God is calling us to something much more exciting.

This year, at the end of what feels like a very long Lent, it would be good for us to reflect upon and pray about what the 'new normal' might look like. I hope it will involve more care, more community, more goodness and more Godliness – but God will work things out much more wonderfully than I could ever plan.

WORKPLACE CHAPLAINCY PUTTING YOUR FAITH INTO ACTION.

Is God calling you to let your Christian faith make a difference in the world of work and commerce? Do you have 2-3 hours per month to make a difference? If you are retired, does your experience give you the gift of understanding and empathy for businesses and those who work in them?

Workplace chaplains make regular visits to the same places of work, usually once per month (although this is severely disrupted currently due to the pandemic). These could be shops, offices, or any place of work which welcomes a chaplain. Through regular visits, the chaplain learns about the business and its challenges and gets to know the staff. The chaplains listen, offering whatever support they can, to everyone they meet, regardless of their faith background. They are motivated by their own Christian faith and respond to the love of Jesus by sharing that care for those in the workplace.

For those who wish to become workplace chaplains, maybe after attending the Discover Chaplaincy Taster Event, we will be running the **INTRODUCTION TO WORKPLACE CHAPLAINCY COURSE** which consists of six 90-minute sessions held on Wednesday afternoons from 2.00 – 3.30 pm starting on Ash Wednesday, 17 February and concluding on 24 March, just before Palm Sunday.

This can be used as a way of exploring a calling to be a workplace chaplain, and again with no obligation on either side. To book a place on the Introduction to Workplace Chaplaincy Course contact Revd Dick Johnson on dickjohnson@faithatwork.org.uk or ring 07946 655450

THE PARTY'S OVER CAKE

This delicious easy to make cake is a great way of using up any marzipan left over from Christmas or buying some to make this cake. People often ask me, why are my cakes dry? Something I have learnt over the years is when you test your cake if the cocktail stick is clean take it out. Don't think I'll give it another 5 mins to make sure. I am also a convert to cake liners. The Pound shops are good value and the liners speed up cake making.

150g/5½oz marzipan (white or yellow) or almond paste, at room temperature, torn into small lumps
125g/4½oz soft butter
1 tsp vanilla paste (or extract)
50g/1¾oz caster sugar
75g/2½oz P. flour
¼ tsp salt
1 tsp Baking powder
3 large free-range eggs at room temperature

Method

1. Preheat the oven to 170C/150C Fan/Gas 3 and place a loaf-tin liner into a 10x20cm/4x8in and 5cm/2in deep 450g/1lb loaf tin, or line the bottom with parchment and butter the sides.
2. The easiest way to make this is to put all the loaf cake ingredients into a food processor and blend until smooth, stopping to scrape down the sides a couple of times.
3. If you don't have a processor, then I advise you to grate the marzipan and beat it together with the butter and vanilla until thoroughly combined, then beat in the sugar. Stir the flour, salt, baking powder. Beat the eggs into the butter mixture, one at a time, adding a third of the dried ingredients after each egg. Carry on beating when everything's in, to make sure you have a coherent batter with no lumps of almond paste visible. Pour and scrape into the prepared tin and bake for 40 minutes (adding a loose covering of foil after 30 minutes to stop it browning any further), or until the cake is beginning to come away from the sides and a cake tester comes out clean.

Ann Jennings

SYMPTOM-FREE (LATERAL FLOW) TESTING - KEY MESSAGES

You must not leave, or be outside of your home except where necessary. You may leave the home to:

- shop for basic necessities, for you or a vulnerable person
- go to work, or provide voluntary or charitable services, if you cannot reasonably do so from home
- exercise with your household (or support bubble) or one other person (in which case you should stay [2m apart](#)). Exercise should be limited to once per day, and you should not travel outside your local area. Stay local means stay in the village, town or part of the city where you work.
- meet your [support bubble](#) or [childcare bubble](#) where necessary, but only if you are legally permitted to form one
- seek medical assistance or avoid injury, illness or risk of harm (including domestic abuse)
- attend education or childcare - for those eligible

Critical workers who are not able to stay at home are encouraged to access lateral flow testing twice a week if possible, to ensure they are not passing on the virus.

- Lateral flow tests are available in a number of locations in Dudley borough and are for those who live or work in the borough. Locations currently include participating pharmacies, Saltwells Education Centre and Dudley Leisure Centre.
- Lateral flow testing will help to reduce the risk of transmission and help stop the spread of COVID-19. It will not eliminate the risk and must be used in conjunction with personal protective equipment (PPE) - you still need to remember hands, face, space and maintain social distancing tests can be booked online and results are available in 20-30 minutes. People will still need to swab their nose and throat, but the results are much faster than the standard test which goes to a lab. If you have had a confirmed positive result for COVID-19 then you must not book a lateral flow test until after 90 days from the date of the positive result– you must book a standard COVID-19 test at one of the borough's testing sites. **If you have no symptoms, book a lateral flow test: Saltwells EDC, Bowling Green Lane, Netherton, Dudley**
<https://bookit.zipporah.co.uk/TrackAndTrace.Dudley/>

Participating local pharmacies

<https://www.1centralhealth.co.uk/covidscreen>

CHURCHES TOGETHER IN STOURBRIDGE

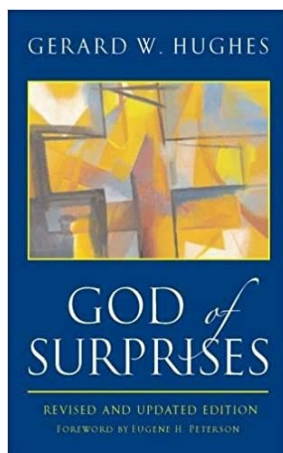
Dear Friends, Happy New Year! Many of you were keen to join a CTiS Lent Study course last year, until it was cut short by coronavirus. Churches Together would like to offer this opportunity again this year, albeit by Zoom. Three churches have agreed to offer courses – on different topics and on different days. Other churches are welcome to join this plan and suggest topics and dates of their own; but we hope you will avoid two courses running at the same day and time.

Lent begins this year on Ash Wednesday, 17 February, and Palm Sunday is on 28 March. So every course will have six sessions.

We give details of the courses below, with the next step if you would like to join any of them. All the leaders would greatly appreciate the enrichment which participants from different traditions offer each other in group discussion. Please note that places in each group are limited, simply to ensure it does not become too big for its purpose.

St Mary's, Oldswinford: Revd. John Flitcroft. Tuesdays 7.00pm

God of Surprises. This course explores how to find the pearl of great price in ourselves, our sharing the very life of God. We'll be reading the book *God of Surprises* by Gerard Hughes, (D.L.T. 1985), which provides practical guidance to deepen our lives of prayer. For fuller details and to join the group, please click this link or email Rev'd John at: st.mary.os.priest@btconnect.com



Amblecote Methodist Church: Revd. Josephine Soon.
Thursday evenings 7.00pm.

The Death of Death and the Death of Jesus Christ. This course will look at the Cross and the death of Jesus Christ using the Bible and two books (John Stott, The Cross of Christ 1986 and John Owen, The Death of Death in the Death of Christ 1959). For fuller details and to enrol, please click this link.

Stourbridge Quaker Meeting: John Lampen. Fridays, 7.30pm.

Finding peace and building peace. This course will explore the different aspects of peace — within ourselves, in our families and workplaces, and in the wider world. Its approach is practical: how can we find our own inner peace? How can we be bringers of peace to the world? Is peace within and between nations a hopeless quest? A short article will be sent out to study before each session. For fuller details and to enrol, please click this link.

To join any of these courses on Zoom, you will need a computer or tablet, internet access, and the Zoom application which can be downloaded free of charge from <https://Zoom.us/download>. Zoom meetings can be joined on a smartphone, but you will probably find that is unsatisfactory for an hour's discussion.



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vaccine scams**

OFFICIAL

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will never:**

- ✗ ask for your bank account or card details
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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

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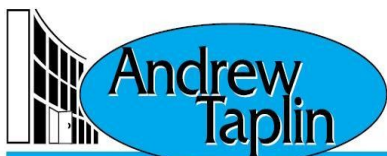
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