

ST MARY'S OLD SWINFORD
OCTOBER 2021

Online Edition

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RECTOR

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Clergy day off Friday

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*Emma's hours of work are: Day off – Monday,
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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 Emma Boex**

PARISH REGISTER

Baptisms: 12th September Amelia WESTWOOD

19th September Ellis ASTON

26th September Eden James TILLEY

Weddings: 10th September Sam POYNER and Emily Rosanne HUGHES

11th September Drew OWEN and Chloe HANCOX

18th September Hayden SMEMILT and Lucy SCRIVEN

Funerals: 13th September Mary Joyce TOLLEY Aged 99

17th September Brayan HANCOX Aged 88

17th September Dorothy DAVIES Aged 98

DIARY OCTOBER 2021

Sunday 3rd	10:00 am	Parish Eucharist
Tuesday 5th	7.30 pm	Rectory, Confirmation Group
Thursday 7th	10.30 am	Holy Communion
Friday 8th		Clergy day off
Sunday 10th	10:00 am	Parish Eucharist
	1:00 pm	Baptism of Marnie Moon VALE
	3:00 pm	Baptism of Annaliese Olivia AVEY
	6.30 pm	Choral Evensong
Tuesday 12th	7.30 pm	Rectory, Confirmation Group
Thursday 14th	10.30 am	Holy Communion
Friday 15th		Clergy day off
Saturday 16th	1:00 pm	Wedding of Jonathan PROSSER and Kelly GRAINGER
Sunday 17th	10:00 am	Parish Eucharist
	1:00 pm	Baptism of Ryan Sidney WOOLDRIDGE
	3:00 pm	Baptism of Sydney Dorothy Stephanie TRIMBEE
	6.30 pm	Evensong
Tuesday 19th	12:15 pm	A celebration in church of Brian DREW's life and interment of his ashes
	7.30 pm	Rectory, Confirmation Group
Thursday 21st	10.30 am	Holy Communion
Friday 22nd		Clergy day off
Saturday 23rd	3:00 pm	Wedding Blessing of Richard and Marina NASH
Sunday 24th	10:00 am	Parish Eucharist
	1:00pm	Baptism of Esme Rose CARTER-HICKMAN
	6.30 pm	Evensong
Tuesday 26th	7.30 pm	Rectory, Confirmation Group
Thursday 28th	10.30 am	Holy Communion
Friday 29th		Clergy day off
Sunday 31st	10:00 am	Parish Eucharist
	6:30pm	Service of Thanksgiving - All Saints/All Souls

FROM THE RECTORY



Dear Friends,

When I was training at The Queen's Foundation for Ecumenical Theological Education we were taught by the brilliant Mark Earey, Tutor in liturgy. 'Liturgy' means all the words and actions we use in a church service. One of the phrases I still associate with him, is: "'Ritual' is a happy word!" He said this because, for so many of us, the word 'ritual' conjures up a dull, repetitive and rather old-fashioned way of doing things. A 'ritual' is habitual, learnt by rote and can sometimes feel only like duty rather than both a duty and a joy. Mark Earey's point was that, at its best, liturgy - which involves rites and rituals - can fully, joyfully connect us with creation, with one another and with God; revealing and celebrating God's love in our lives.

That word 'liturgy' comes from a Greek root meaning 'work of the people'. When you're next in church and the words being said by the priest or leader are perhaps just flowing over or around you; try to remember that the words are a kind of 'work' and that work is *yours* not that of whoever happens to have the microphone! In symbolic words and actions we are able to become more and more the body of Christ. The writer on liturgy, Jean Lebon, says that the liturgy *works on us*:

'We have to allow ourselves to be acted on by it, or rather by the Christ who.....acts by it.'

'How to Understand the Liturgy' Jean Lebon, 1986

We have just come to the end of a season called Creationtide. Some calendars have it ending on October 4th, the Feast of St Francis of Assisi. Francis understood all creation to be in profound relationship with God the creator and sustainer of life. He called all parts of creation 'fellow creatures of God'. In his 'Canticle of the Creatures' (a kind of song of praise), he recognised that we can call everything God makes 'sister' or 'brother'; a true kinship with the heart of creation. In Franciscan thought there is no dominance of nature by humankind, rather 'every creature in the world was a mirror of God's presence, and, if approached correctly, a step leading one to God.' [*To Care for the Earth* by Sean McDonagh 1986]

With St Mary's Creationtide service, in the liturgy we reflect this belief. We recite a 'Song of Praise' which celebrates the natural world as both a revelation of God and a chorus of answering praise from creature to Creator. It names birds, beast and plants found in our churchyard:

Sheltering oak, beech, birch, pine, **bless the Lord:**

Dog-rose, foxglove and creeping thistle, **praise and glorify God for ever.**

Scolding wren and soaring buzzard, **bless the Lord:**
darting birds with flashing wings, **praise and glorify God for ever.**

This is an ancient idea. We only have to look at the Psalms to see that. Psalm 148, for example, suggests that everything God makes lives to praise God just through the joy of being. And, in our liturgy, the invitation to share 'the Peace' includes the same idea from the book *Isaiah*: 'You shall go out in joy and be led back in peace; the mountains and the hills before you shall burst into song, and all the trees of the field shall clap their hands' (*Isaiah 55 v. 12*)

Worship, then, is ultimately an expression of our praise and gratitude for our very being, loved and precious in God. St. Francis believed that every element of the natural world worships with praise instinctively and endlessly. Perhaps we can learn from all God's creatures how we too can praise God through every part of our being!

Finally, there is to be a new course on the liturgy and how we can relate it to our daily lives. 'From Liturgy to Life' is offered by Doug Chaplin at Worcester Diocese and will be on-line/Zoom for 4 Wednesdays from November 3rd at 7.30 pm. Find out more at: <https://www.cofe-worcester.org.uk/news/from-liturgy-to-life-a-new-course-for-parishes.php>

Rev'd John

A HISTORY OF THE OLD SWINFORD BELLS

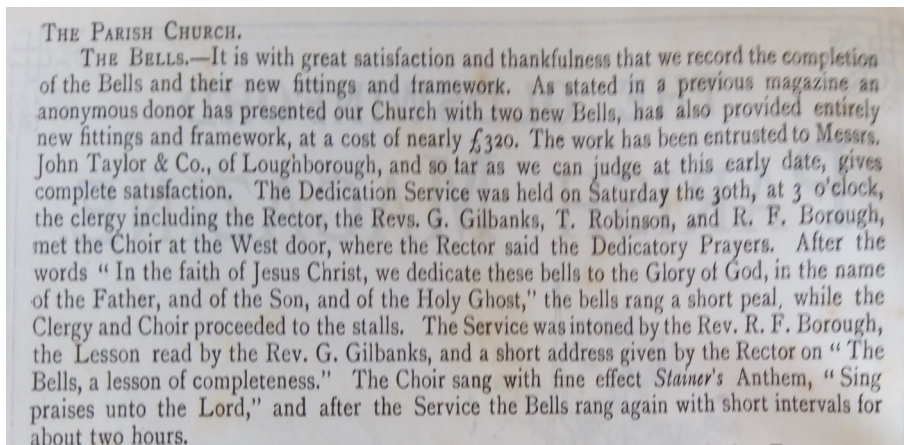
Part Two (1890 to 1902)

In Part One of this history we traced the story of the bells up until 1890, when what was the fourth bell of six then, now the sixth bell of eight, cracked when ringing for the harvest festival. A repair by electric welding was attempted but this does not seem to have been very satisfactory since the bell was recast the following year by Messrs. Carr & Co. of Smethwick, who also rehung the peal.

Unfortunately, this recasting did not seem to be any more successful than the attempt at electric welding and by early 1902 it was clear that funding needed to be raised to replace this bell.

At this point an anonymous benefactor stepped forward with an offer to finance both the replacement of this bell and that of another bell in the belfry. It has been pleasing to find reference to this kindly act in our own parish magazine archives.

The item shown below is a clipping from the Old Swinford Parish Magazine of September 1902:



A Taylor catalogue of the period contains the following testimonial from the Rector:

Oldswinford Rectory,
Stourbridge,
1st September 1902

Dear Sir, I write to say that the bells give complete satisfaction. They appear to be in perfect tune and ring far more easily than of old. The two new ones add much to the general effect, and a remark I heard yesterday seems to voice the general feeling that "they are like a Cathedral peal."

With many thanks for your work and prompt attention

Believe me, yours faithfully, J.G. Owen

Shown below is an extract from Taylor's invoice :

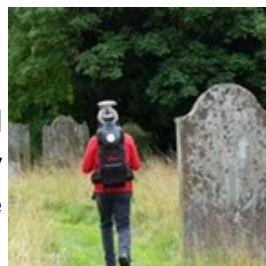
1902		L. of Bell L. of Ring		L. of Bell L. of Ring	
The Rector & Churchwarden Oldswinford, Stourbridge					
Aug 30	Two new trebles completing the octave acc. to agreement 768/13q. and each 21 Alb				
1901 397/13q.					
1. 4 1. 15					
2. 4 2 13					
9. 0. 0		at 6. 12.		59	17 -
Description 176 letters at 12				2	18 8
Recasting the old of six				18	- -
Recast bell 6. 2 14					
Old 7. 1. 8					
Three fittings for the right 104/				80	- -
Two from 2.				105	- -
Fitting two joining				30	- -
Carriage				14	5 -
Fitting				5	- -
Carriage of bell to & from for temporary use				5	- -
Fitting for house 26				2	- -
Carriage of bell 18 Alb				1	3
				317	6 11

Reference: Chris Pickford's survey of Worcestershire bells and clocks.
Old Swinford Parish Magazine September 1902

Stephen Howard

Nationwide digital churchyard mapping project begins

The first of 19,000 churchyards has been surveyed as part of a Church of England project to create a free digital map of every grave and feature in every churchyard in the country.



The ancient church of St Bega on the shores of Lake Bassenthwaite in the Diocese of Carlisle is the first churchyard to be scanned by surveyors using sophisticated laser equipment, as part of the national programme.

A new website will go online next year giving free access to the map which is expected to be of special interest to local community groups, conservationists, and those researching family history. The website will also enable the charting of biodiversity and green technology.

The Church of England has partnered with Cumbrian-based surveying company Atlantic Geomatics who will use back-pack mounted laser scanners to quickly and accurately map churchyards. They will also photograph all the visible headstones.

There are around 19,000 Anglican burial grounds in England, and the ambitious scheme will aim to digitally survey the majority over the coming seven years. Data on burials will be combined with other information, such as the National Biodiversity Network Atlas, to present the most complete picture of churchyards to date.

The project will come at no cost to parishes or dioceses in the Church of England and parishes will have free access to the map through a new web-based record system which is set to launch in spring 2022. There will also be the option to subscribe to additional services.

Substantial funding for the programme has been given by Historic England, with the National Lottery Heritage Fund and Caring for God's Acre supporting the pilot phase, as well as support from genealogy research websites, all of which has allowed the basic service to be made available to parishes free of charge.

Use of the latest surveying equipment and bespoke software built by Atlantic Geomatics has made the national-scale survey a possibility for the first time. Operatives will aim to survey around nine or ten sites a day using back-pack mounted laser scanning equipment, GPS and cameras. Taking tens of thousands measurements every second the surveyors will then process the data to create accurate maps of each churchyard.

News from the Church of England

Mothers' Union

We are still collecting toiletries, e.g. soap, shampoo, shower gel, toothpaste, hand cream, for the Women's Refuge.

If you would like to donate anything there is a blue box on the Mothers' Union table in the Narthex. Or you could contact a member who will arrange collection.

Thank you to everyone who has donated in the past. Next meeting: Tuesday 12th October at 2.15pm in the Narthex. The Speaker is from Home Instead. All welcome.

Alison Taylor

Christian Aid

Christian Aid in Stourbridge are asking whether any individuals or groups in your church would like to make "prayer boats" to carry prayers and wishes for the UN Climate Change Conference, COP26, being held later this autumn.

As Stourbridge Christian Aid Group we are following the theme "We all face the same storm but we're not all in the same boat". We aim to collect and display prayer boats made by churches in Stourbridge before eventually sending them off to Glasgow to join prayer boats from throughout the UK for display at COP26.

Locally Stourbridge Christian Aid will be mounting an exhibit as a part of the "Exhibition of local groups actively involved in responding to Climate Change" which is being held in St Thomas' Church from 9th - 17th October. We hope to collect as many prayer boats as possible for our exhibit there before sending them off to COP26 at Glasgow.

The web page below tells you all about the prayer boat initiative. Importantly it shows how to have fun by folding one out of paper (much like some of our granddads did to make a sun hat from their paper?)

https://www.christianaid.org.uk/sites/default/files/2021-07/J244337_YCCN_activity_pack_AW.pdf

Mike Blaxland

SHEPHERD'S PIE POTATOES

Serves 1

When I asked my husband if Shepherd's pie was more of a wintery dish he assured me it was an anytime of the year dish. I always buy mince from the butchers as it is far superior to supermarket mince, cooks quicker and tastes better. Also able to buy smaller amounts. If you have any mince left it can be frozen for another time. Could be a good recipe for students leaving home for university.

2 tsp butter

Little chopped onion

140g minced beef

250ml beef stock approx. may not need it all.

1 tsp Worcestershire sauce

1tsp tomato puree

1 large jacket potato, baked

Grated cheese

Preheat oven to 200c/180cfan/gas6

Melt half butter in a non-stick pan. Cook the onion for 3-4 mins, then increase the heat, add mince fry for a further 5 mins to brown. Stir in stock, Worc sauce, tomato puree and seasoning. Simmer for 30 mins until mince is cooked and sauce has thickened.

To assemble, cut the potato in half lengthways and scoop out the flesh into a small bowl leaving skin intact. Mash the potato with the rest of the butter, season. Divide the meat mixture between the potato skins, cover with the mash. Transfer to a baking dish, sprinkle with the cheese and bake for 15-20 mins until golden.

If all the ingredients are hot it could be just finished off under a hot grill to brown the cheese.

Ann Jennings

Where was the First Oldswinford Parish Workhouse Situated?

In the aftermath of the Covid pandemic, it is interesting to look back at how our Parish dealt with ever increasing poverty three hundred years ago. A wonderful set of our parish minutes still survive at Worcester dating from 1723 up to 1829. These tell us how a workhouse was built for the church in 1738, to take in the infirm of the parish who had previously been housed and supported in cottages rented by the Parish; the new building initially provided for six beds. The one big problem is that this workhouse is not named on any of the very few early maps of the area, or indeed any later maps. At a guess, part of its buildings survived in the garden of The Laurels for many years. The original workhouse was abandoned in 1800, when a new 'House of Industry' to house the poor of the Parish was constructed on the west side of Hagley Road, close to the junction of Worcester Lane - this in later years was the site of a Model Laundry and is well documented. This second Parish workhouse closed in early 1837, three years after the 1834 Poor Law Amendment Act that resulted in the building of the Wordsley Workhouse which provided beds for a number of parishes surrounding it, including our own.

Nigel Tonks, a member of our congregation may recently have solved the mystery of the location of our first workhouse. Living on the south side of Priory Road, he was excavating his rear garden for a new shed when he uncovered the remains of an old pigsty; from here ran a very old wall that went under the foundations of a later wall constructed of Victorian firebrick, so would certainly have been built earlier than 1800. His close neighbour, who had lived in the road for many years, remembered another old building standing nearby which looked like a dormitory with a number of bedrooms. Some of the land between Priory Road, St Mary's Lane and Rectory Road belonged to the Church in earlier years (maybe Glebeland?) and had The Parish Rooms built on part of it ; one very old wall can still be seen in St Mary's Lane.

A Parish Minute dated 21st September 1741 (exactly 280 years ago) dictates 'that a wall be built from the end of the Workhouse to the Pig-Stye, four foot high above the ground'. This could well be the very same wall which has been excavated by our parishioner this year! Is any other member of our congregation in possession of any old plans or deeds which could throw more light on the location of the first Parish workhouse?

Afghan Refugee Support

We have received this message via the Churches Together in Stourbridge network.

In light of the terrible situation which these refugees will have left behind them, please donate any of the items listed below if you are able:

Our Lady and All Saints, via Union Street, Stourbridge will be a drop off point for much needed donations in support of Afghan refugees.

Please drop off donations ***on Thursdays between 6:00-8:00pm at Our Lady and All Saints Parish Centre.*** They will be taken from there to a central point for sorting and distribution. At present they will go to the Muslim Food hub in West Bromwich for distribution to refugees in Birmingham. Dudley is expecting refugees soon.

Suitable donations are:

- ☐ Clothes
- ☐ Socks
- ☐ Underwear
- ☐ Scarves and hats
- ☐ Pyjamas
- ☐ Shoes
- ☐ Warm clothes
- ☐ Toiletries
- ☐ Toothbrush kits
- ☐ Small toys

Do feel free to make up shoeboxes of donations.

Please do not leave things at other times.

Please access the Parish Centre Car Park from Union Street, off the Hagley Road.

Do not enter off the ring road.

Thank You!

Growing as Kingdom People

During the month of September we asked everyone across the diocese to join in a month of prayer for the work we are undertaking in transformation and change, which I have the privilege to lead. I hope you were part of that, and I write now to say, "Please don't stop praying!"



Our transformation work is all about our wonderful and varied churches becoming more healthy and sustainable as we grow as kingdom people. You will notice an increasing focus on health and sustainability this autumn as we hopefully begin to emerge from the constraints of the pandemic. There will be things for us all to do, decisions to be taken, plans to be made, local visions to be dreamed and put into practice. You will hear lots more over the next few months, particularly about how we will be providing support for churches in working out what it means to be healthy and sustainable in your individual context, setting and tradition, and taking some steps towards this.

But none of this is of value if it's not underpinned in prayer. God promises to build his church, and invites us to join in with what he's doing. How we discern this is in prayer, seeking the guidance of the Holy Spirit. And how it takes effect, is through God blessing our efforts as we cry out in prayer, recognising our utter dependence on him as we seek to be the body of Christ in Dudley and Worcestershire.

The four key elements of our **Growing as Kingdom People** vision are making disciples, transforming communities, sharing hope and worshipping God creatively, which when woven together make for healthier churches. Please continue to pray about your church's engagement with these four areas, and get involved where you can, in ways which suit your gifts, skills and passions.

Please pray too for our churches as sustainability is addressed through our new Ministry Share system, about which PCCs have received letters, explaining how the costs of providing ministry in your parish or benefice are worked out. God is interested in our giving, so praying about it is key, and can help us to prioritise our church expenditure wisely and generously.

So please pray regularly and passionately with me for all these things. Praying is how we grow in our relationship with God, and loving him and knowing ourselves to be loved by him are the most important parts of our vision.

You may like to commit to daily praying our **Growing as Kingdom People Prayer**:

Gracious God, who pours out the life-giving Holy Spirit on your kingdom people,

Fill our hearts with love to worship you creatively,

Equip us to make disciples, inspire us to share hope

And anoint us to transform our communities,

Through Jesus Christ our Lord, in whose name we pray. Amen

Nikki Groarke.



As we look forward to celebrating Harvest at St Mary's, Sally Frost will be decorating the church on Saturday 2nd October. If you would like to help there has been a list put at the back of church for people to sign up for an area to decorate.

We are grateful for the sponsorship of the following businesses



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**Want to find out more? Come along to a ses-
sion with no obligation to join.....**

**WEDNESDAYS 9.30am at Pedmore Cricket
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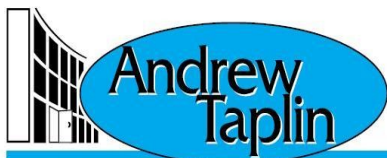
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