

**ST MARY'S OLD SWINFORD
NOVEMBER 2021**

Online Edition

ST MARY'S OLD SWINFORD

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RECTOR

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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: 10th October Marnie Moon VALE

& Annaliese Olivia AVEY

17th October Ryan Sidney WOOLDRIDGE

24th October Esme Rose CARTER-HICKMAN

Weddings: 16th October Elizabeth GRAINGER and Jonathan PROSSER

23rd October (Wedding Blessing) Marina and Richard NASH

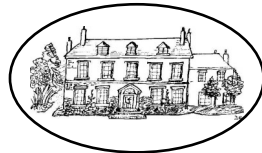
Funerals: 29th September (Crem) Valerie PARTRIDGE Aged 95

25th October Zoe Caroline DAINOW Aged 61

DIARY NOVEMBER 2021

Monday 1st	7.00pm Prayer, reflection and meditation in the Narthex 7.30 pm Standing committee in the Vestry
Thursday 4th	10.30 am Holy Communion
Friday 5th	Clergy day off
Sunday 7th	10 am Parish Eucharist 1 pm Baptism of Albert LEES 4 pm '4 o'clock church'—new families & children's service
Monday 8th	7.00pm Prayer, reflection and meditation in the Narthex
Tuesday 9th	12.45 Funeral in church of baby Louie George Howell
Thursday 11th	10.30 am Holy Communion
Friday 12th	Clergy day off
Sunday 14th	10 am Parish Eucharist: Remembrance Sunday 3 pm Baptism of Isaac Joseph MARTIN 6.30 pm Choral Evensong
Monday 15th	7.30 pm PCC meeting in the Narthex, (final prayer meeting postponed, please listen for announcements)
Wednesday 17th	10.30 am Prayer Meeting Marjorie Ferguson's house
Thursday 18th	10.30 am Holy Communion
Friday 19th	Clergy day off
Sunday 21st	10 am Parish Eucharist 3 pm Baptism of Daisy Olive EVITTS 6.30 pm Evensong
Wednesday 24th	7 pm Mary Stevens Hospice: Tree of Light: reflective service
Thursday 25th	10.30 am Holy Communion
Friday 26th	Clergy day off
Sunday 28th	10 am Parish Eucharist: Advent Sunday 3 pm Baptism of Sydney Dorothy TRIMBEE 6.30 pm Advent Carols service

FROM THE RECTORY



Dear Friends,

November is the month in which the Church celebrates the season of All Saints. The term 'saints' leads to the question: 'What makes a Saint?'

I'd like to throw very little light on that question through a terrible joke and a short story. The joke came from my Father in Law, (whose sermons were often lit up with stories like these). Apologies to those who've heard it from me before. The story, a traditional one, is adapted from one collected by Margaret Silf in her book, 'Wisdom Stories' [Lion-Hudson 2003].

The joke: Reg went to see his minister after his brother had died. "Reverend", he said, " I want you to take my brother Jimmy's funeral and, in the eulogy, I want you to tell everyone who comes that Jimmy was a saint." The minister shook his head, "I'm sorry Reg, I don't see how I can do that. I knew Jimmy - everybody did - he was a cheat, a liar and he was a thief." Reg said: "I thought you might say that. So, if you tell everyone that he was a saint, I promise I'll write you a cheque for £10,000 for your church roof fund."

On the day of the funeral the minister began his eulogy: "Everybody who knew Jimmy knew he had what you might call a colourful life. We know too all about his cheating, lying and thieving. However, as sinful as he was, compared to his brother Reg....Jimmy was a Saint!"

The short story concerns a little girl and her Mum visiting a church. When they were inside the building the bright sunshine flooded through the stained glass windows and threw coloured light on the stone floor. The little girl was entranced. Pointing to the pattern she said to her Mum: "look! Isn't it lovely! What is it?" Her Mum replied: "Well, actually that's a Saint. See the window high up there? There's a picture of a Saint up there and the light is shining through her and making her colours dance for us here on the stone floor."

A few days later, in school, the little girl's teacher was talking about saints. 'What do you think makes a saint?' she asked the class.

The little girl's hand shot up: "A saint is someone the light shines through", she explained, "and when that happens, the stones come to life!"

God Bless you - and all the Saints.

John Howard May: 2nd July 1934—28th June 2021

Dear Friends at St Mary's,

St Mary's had been Howard's spiritual home for almost eighty years, during which time he had held many roles: from Boy Chorister, Server, Sunday School Teacher, Youth Club Leader, PCC Member to Parish magazine Editor.

Over the past five years, due to ill health and poor mobility he was unable to attend the Church he loved so much and was saddened by the thought that he would never see the inside of this beautiful building again.

It was heart-warming and humbling to see so many people at his funeral service, (in spite of the rail). Your generosity in his memory means that the young homeless of St Basil's will benefit too.

We, his family, thank you for your continued prayers and support as we try to come to terms with a world without a much-loved and respected Husband, Father and Grandfather.

With our love and every blessing,

The May Family

THE FUTURE OF THE MAGAZINE

The St Mary's Parish Church Magazine has a long history of valued service to Oldswinford. For several years, new technologies have steadily led to a reduction in the circulation of this publication and, currently it seems likely that the December 2021 edition will be the last. A Monthly Newsletter in a different format is proposed that will provide advance information of events in the Parish and the wider community.

All members of the Magazine Committee have given very many years of service and most feel that the time has come for them to step down from involvement. We thank them all for their generosity and commitment. Most importantly, without an editor who is able to commit to compile the magazine on a regular monthly basis, there is little chance of continuing the magazine. If there is anyone who thinks they may be interested in filling this vacancy or helping in some other way, please contact Revd John, one of the wardens or any member of the magazine committee.

STOP PRESS: *We may have found a new Editor! Watch this space! JF*

CELEBRATION OF AUTHORISED LAY MINISTRY AT THE CATHEDRAL

At a service in Worcester Cathedral on Sunday, 19th September, Mary Flitcroft received her certificate from the Bishop of Worcester, on completion of her course of training as an Authorised Lay Minister (Worship). This was a very special occasion attended by several members of our St Mary's congregation in support of Mary and in recognition of her achievement. This was the first time that all of the candidates for this course had been able to meet in a face to face situation. The entire one year course had been



undertaken by means of virtual meetings with study tasks addressed online due to the restrictions imposed by the pandemic. No doubt this had added to the challenge of the course of study and to the significance of Mary's achievement and of the many who completed the course alongside her. In his sermon, Revd Dr Michael Brierley spoke to the whole congregation in acknowledging the importance of ALM ministry. He underlined his message by pointing out that such is the significance of the ministry offered by those other than ordained clergy that they should be seen centre-stage, supported by Priests and Bishops and not as peripheral to the ministry of the church. With due regard for the sentiment shared in this address, Bishop John stood to the side of the candidates at the end of the service as photographs were taken to commemorate the occasion.

THE POPPY APPEAL

This year marks the centenary of the first Poppy Appeal in 1921, following the founding of the British Legion on 15 May that year (it became the Royal British Legion in 1925).

1921 saw a contraction of the British economy following the Great War. More than two million people were unemployed, many of them disabled veterans, and there was great need to care for those who had suffered, both those who had served and their families. This was compounded by the influenza pandemic which lasted for two years and claimed, it is estimated, up to 50 million lives worldwide; double the number of deaths in the war itself.



In that first year the appeal raised £106,000, which was spent to help veterans needing housing and jobs, and this has now risen to more than £50m annually.

The red poppy is a symbol of both remembrance and hope for a peaceful future, and a reminder of life flourishing even in the darkest and most inhospitable places. The flowering of poppies on the battlefields of 1915, defying the death and destruction all around, inspired the poet John McCrae to write the now famous poem, 'In Flanders Field', which itself inspired others to adopt the poppy in memory of the fallen.

ST MARY'S WALKING GROUP

25th September 2021

Nine people set off from The Dudley Arms pub to head towards Himley Hall. In lovely weather we walked across the grounds and turned right on a path that led us to Baggeridge Country Park. A bit of a climb but lovely scenery with three different lakes. We passed the Café and play area to join a tarmac track and shortly moved onto a side path to avoid any traffic.

We soon turned into Gospel End Common and walked along a variety of paths. We were high up and had lovely views. We stopped for a short break, and then continued along woodlands and fields passing a farm and heading towards the A449. We safely crossed the dual carriageway and continued down Battlefield Lane to Wom Brook by 'The Pool Dam'.

We walked along open ground following the brook and finally headed up a flight of steps to the disused railway track. We passed remnants of the old Himley Station, and further on went down steep steps to the road where we did a U turn to go under the railway track. We headed on along a Bridle path that led us to School Road and finally back to The Dudley Arms for our meal.

Toni & Bob



Members of St Mary's walking group on a previous trip?

Around the Diocese

Worcester Cathedral.

A new Precentor at the Cathedral. HM The Queen has approved the appointment of the Revd John Paul Hoskins as Residentiary Canon at the Cathedral. **See page 11.**

St Anne's Church Bewdley

St Anne's Church in Bewdley held a special service to mark the start of Black History Month, which included historical research on the town's black history and local speakers who have a record of taking action.

Dudley Top Church

Bishop Martin is also hosting an evening at Top Church for Minority Ethnic Anglican Leaders, both lay and ordained, to celebrate ethnic diversity and the struggle for racial justice in our Church. Look out for photos on their social media pages.

St Matthias Church, Malvern Link

Malvern Link with Cowleigh has recently opened a Dementia Meeting Centre in St Matthias Church as part of their ministry to the local community.

Caring for our Smaller Churches.

Churches with 20 or fewer active members make up 45% of our churches. As Dean of Smaller Churches, Alison Maddocks provides practical support to these churches, as well as helping them to connect with each other to share wisdom.

SUNDAY PUDDING

Our name for this simple pudding. Many years ago a friend gifted me a recipe book from her holiday in America. This recipe became a favourite as my daughters made it before Sunday School and we popped it in the oven whilst we ate our roast dinner. I make it in an enamel pie dish but the original recipe says a 7in(18cm) pie dish. Now without the luxury of child labour I make it in my food processor, coarsely grating the apple first and removing it. Making the custard mixture and adding the apple back and quickly processing to combine. I lay the walnut halves on top.

Serves 4

100g caster sugar
1 egg
75g SR Flour
Pinch salt
1 ½ tsp baking powder
1 raw cooking apple chopped
Few walnuts
1 tsp vanilla essence
A little milk to mix

Pre heat oven to 350, Gas 4

Beat the sugar and egg with a wooden spoon. Sift the flour, salt and baking powder and stir into the mixture. Add the apple and nuts and lastly the vanilla essence and a little milk so that the mixture is not too stiff, but not runny. Place in a greased pie dish and bake for 40 mins until the pie has risen and is lightly brown on top.

Serve with custard or cream.

Ann Jennings

NEW PRECENTOR AT THE CATHEDRAL

The Chapter of Worcester Cathedral is delighted that The Queen has approved the appointment of the Revd John Paul Hoskins as Residentiary Canon and Precentor in succession to Canon Michael Brierley.

John Paul is at present Priest-in-Charge of Winchcombe in the Diocese of Gloucester. Among his previous posts he has been a Minor Canon of Gloucester Cathedral and Chaplain to two Bishops of Gloucester.

Before ordination he was a Lay Clerk at Guildford and Durham Cathedrals. John Paul is married to Liz, who is a consultant ophthalmologist and who grew up in the Teme Valley, west of Worcester. They have a daughter Suzanna, who is 8 and the household also includes two border terriers.

John Paul said: "I'm enormously excited to be coming to Worcester as the new Precentor. Worcester Cathedral has a tremendous history of welcome and worship, with an outstanding musical tradition. I'm hugely looking forward to joining the Cathedral as part of a great community of prayer and praise to God."

The Bishop of Worcester, the Right Revd Dr John Inge, says: "I am delighted that The Queen has approved the appointment of John Paul Hoskins as Precentor. He is a very gifted priest with a wealth of relevant experience. We look forward greatly to welcoming him."

The Dean of Worcester, the Very Reverend Peter Atkinson, said: "With his pastoral and musical background, John Paul is highly qualified for the post of Precentor, and I'm thrilled that he is joining the Cathedral community."

John Paul will be installed in late January.



Diocese News

Flower Guild

SUSTAINABLE FLOWER ARRANGING

In an article in the Church Times published on 21st September 2021 Bishop Martin wrote:

“Like many, I love to see flower arrangements in church and always admire the ingenuity and skill of flower arrangers, however I have recently been made aware of the damaging impact of floral foam. As a diocese, we are committed to playing our part in tackling the climate crisis and stopping using floral foam is one change that we can make in the fight to reduce single use plastics. The Royal Horticultural Society have now banned floral foam in their displays at shows, such as Chelsea and Malvern, and I urge churches to also take a lead in this area to ensure our wonderful floral displays are as sustainable as possible.”



There was an explanation of how oasis is not good for the environment:

Floral foam is made of plastic which easily crumbles into microscopic fragments, and it is not compostable. The foam is generally used wet and after being soaked, waste water is typically discarded into the sink or drain, adding to the problem of microplastic contamination in aquatic environments. Many of our churches are already using chicken wire and bamboo as an alternative to foam, which is a much more sustainable solution.

Having being guided to this article by Judy Hall I noticed there was a Sustainable Church Flower Arranging Workshop being held in Droitwich on Saturday 9th October. Avril Williams and I decided to sign up for it. The mechanics for our arrangement were chicken wire and a black bucket. There was also an array of foliage and autumn flowers for us to use along with those we had taken ourselves.



The demonstrator, Kate Hurst, explained how to fold the chicken wire to provide maximum support for the foliage and flowers then put together an arrangement herself before letting us loose to work on our own creation.

I know there are some members of the Flower Guild who have used chicken wire (and other mechanics) to arrange flowers but I have only ever used oasis and felt completely out of my comfort zone. I like to make quite structured arrangements, the ones we created on Saturday were much more free flowing and, I suppose, much more natural looking.

However, we did create a sustainable arrangement which we then took back to church and placed by the Prayer board. Those who knew what we had done did admire it.

It is going to be a challenge but I hope that from now on we at St Mary's will become sustainable flower arrangers and we will not be using oasis in the future.

Sally Frost

Harvest Supper

On Saturday 2nd October our Harvest Supper took place in the Church Hall. This was the Social Committee's first such event since Covid and all its restrictions.

It was a great evening and good to see so many people enjoying the chance to chat with friends. Mike kindly supplied a couple of quizzes to test our memories between courses. No prizes but good fun. As for the food - there was very little left so it must have been all right.

Thanks to the Social Committee for the chicken casseroles and to the ladies, mainly from the Thursday Communion congregation, who volunteered to make the crumbles; and to all that helped put out and put away chairs and tables.

Hopefully next year we will be able to meet in greater numbers.

Sue Wakeley

LEST WE FORGET

“When you go home, tell them of us and say, for their tomorrow, we gave our today”.

Those words, composed by John Maxwell Edmonds for use on war memorials, have gained a familiar place in our Remembrance Sunday observances. They are words which prompt us to ask, ‘How do we live now, being the survivors, the heirs, and at least in some respects the beneficiaries, of the dead whose names we remember today?’



For some people that is a particularly hard question to be asked. There is, as we know, something called ‘survivor guilt’, a sad and painful state of mind which finds it hard to come to terms with living when others have died. Those who have lost friends or relatives or comrades in wars, in accidents, in natural catastrophes, in acts of terror, but themselves come through physically unscathed, can find themselves bearing a different sort of scar.

But these words are not meant to add to the weight of survivor-guilt for those who suffer from it; they are addressed to us all. How do we, the living, build a world, fashion a society, create a community which is somehow worthy of the price paid by the dead?

Well, one answer is clear: it is not to go back and recreate a vanished era, though there are worrying signs today of that sort of nostalgia.

So what is our agenda, a century on from when John Maxwell Edmonds wrote his famous words, a century in which the dead have never stopped saying, ‘For your tomorrow, we gave our today?’ The dead whom we remember today, we say, gave their today that there might be a tomorrow worth having. Let’s make the ‘tomorrow’ we offer our children a ‘tomorrow’ for which they will be grateful.

Peter Atkinson, Dean of Worcester

Community News

MARY STEVENS HOSPICE

Tree of Light. In the hospice grounds. The local community will be invited along to remember and reflect. There will be services, firstly on 20th November at the hospice and then on 24th November at St Mary's church. The tree of light will remain lit from 20th November to 6th January.

MARY STEVENS PARK

Plenty going on here if you fancy keeping fit. Friday Stretch & Tone classes taking place every week during November, places limited. Or how about 'Couch to 5K'? This will take you from couch potato to running 5K. Again, places limited.

STOURBRIDGE TOWN HALL

The Stourbridge Theatre Company presents 'The Hound of the Baskervilles'. The third of four crime novels written by Sir Arthur Conan Doyle featuring the famous detective Sherlock Holmes. This production has been re-scheduled from April 2020. Thursday 25th November to Saturday 27th November.

KINVER SPORTS AND COMMUNITY CENTRE

Cancer Research Christmas Craft Fayre, Stourbridge. Saturday 20th November 09.00 to 16.00. A range of stalls selling unique hand made gifts and ideas for Christmas. All for a worthy cause.

KING EDWARD VI COLLEGE, STOURBRIDGE

Autumn concert. A varied programme from the choir, chamber choir, orchestra, string orchestra, wind band, jazz band and a range of smaller groups. Tuesday 9th November 7pm to 9pm. Check with venue for ticket details.

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