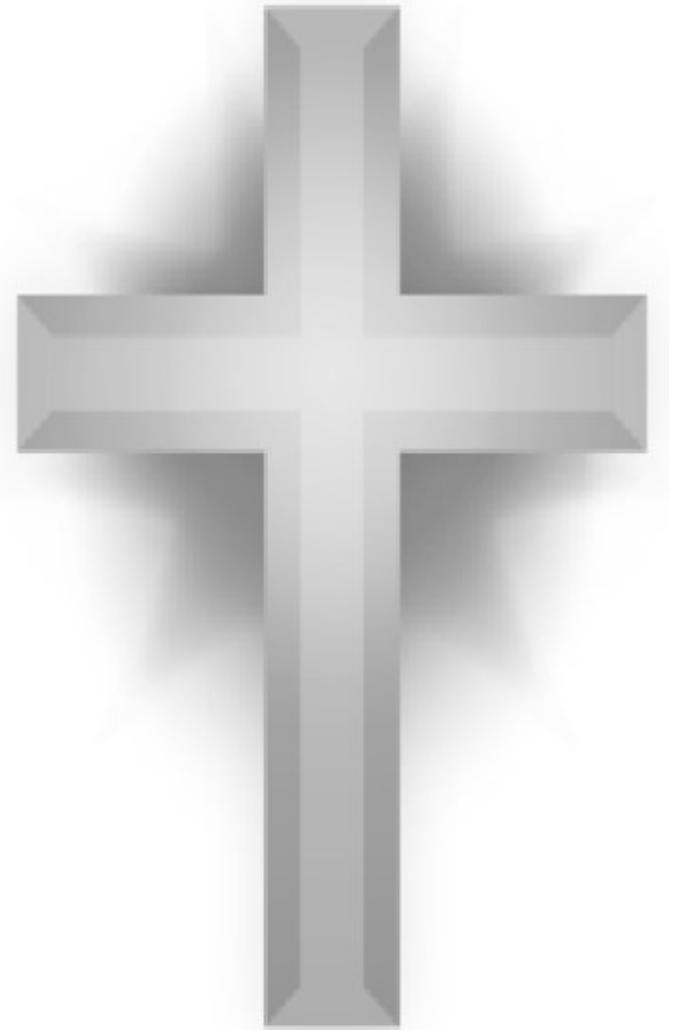
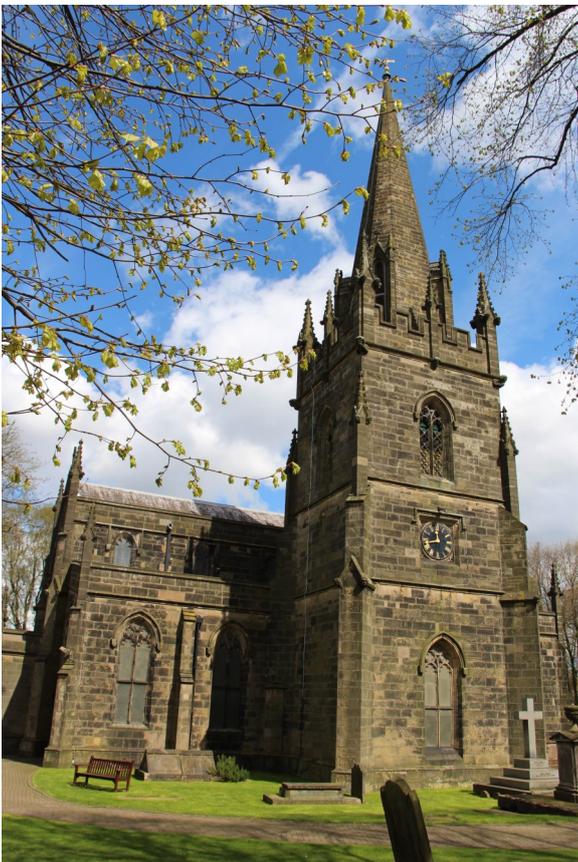


THE BEACON

THE PARISH MAGAZINE OF ALL SAINTS, SEDGLEY
& ST.ANDREW'S THE STRAITS

Registered Charity Number 1179471



Kingdom People
love • compassion • justice • freedom

50p

MAY 2019

WHO's WHO

Team Rector	Revd Guy Hewlett	01902 295164
Team Vicar	Rev Catherine Mitchell	01902 677897
Licensed Lay Minister	Canon Jan Humphries	01902 661275
Parish Safeguarding Officer	Barbara Baker	01902 882847
Pastoral Care	Tracey Bate	01902 680727
Worship Leader	Suzanne Bradley	01902 880055
Youth Leader/Children's Advocate	Laura Robinson	01902 678572
PCC Secretary	Kath Apperley	01902 663253
Vestry Clerk	Chris Williams	01902 672880
Parish Office information baptisms, weddings, funerals and hall bookings.	Gail Griffiths	01902 540289
Parish Wardens	Keith Tomlinson	01902 673366
	John Anderson	01902 677666
Treasurer	John Anderson	01902 677666
Caretaker	Pam Pugh	07860 256535
Server / Verger	Len Millard	01902 676339
Junior Church	Barbara Price	01902 676591
Brownies	Heather Churm	01902 674709
Ladies' Society	Geraldine Baker	01902 674608
Men's Society	Roger Berry	01902 881374
Mothers' Union	Liz Williams	01902 672880
Noah's Ark	Linda Edwards	01902 672556
Parent & Toddler Group		
Rainbows	Liz Naylor	07827 629648
Web Editor	Martin Jones	01902 884461
Youth Group	Laura Robinson	01902 678572
Bell Ringer	Keith Williams	01902 672585
Organist	Martin Platts	07941 173252

St Andrew's Who's Who

Warden	Canon Jan Humphries	
Treasurer	Alan Turner	01902 670938
DCC secretary	Rosemary Reed	01902 679007
Little Angels baby & toddler group	Canon Jan Humphries	
Singing Angels	Claire Cox	07812 010108

Parish Prayers at 9.15am - All are Welcome

Tuesdays at St Andrew,

Wednesdays at St Peter and

Thursdays at All Saints.

Funerals in April

1st April -	Brian Jukes -	St Andrew
4th April -	Harry Shaw -	All Saints
9th April -	Ken Price -	Gornal Wood
12th April -	Dennis Wheelwright -	Gornal Wood
18th April -	Jonah Taylor -	Gornal Wood
24th April -	Malcolm Northall -	All Saints

High Days & Holy Days for May

1	May Day
1	Philip the Apostle/James the Less
2	Athanasius
8	Julian of Norwich
9	Pachomius
New*10	Comgall
14	Matthias the Apostle – called by lots
16	Caroline Chisholm
19	Dunstan
21	Helena, Protector of the Holy Places
24	John and Charles Wesley
26	Augustine of Canterbury
26	Rogation Sunday (the Sunday before Ascension)
30	The Ascension
30	Joan of Arc
31	Visit BV Mary to Elizabeth

THE BEACON

If you are interested in having the magazine delivered to your home on a regular basis please contact:

Keith Tomlinson : tel. 01902 673366.

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Articles for the June magazine need to be sent to:

admin@allsaintssedgley.co.uk

by

Friday 17th May

and needs to be in Arial typeface, size 18.

Do not send files in pdf format

WEBSITE: www.gornalandsedgley.org.uk

CHURCH OPENING



**Friday mornings from
10.30am to 12.30pm**

The church is open for quiet prayer & coffee and a chat.

VESTRY HOUR

Vestry hour will take place on the first and third Sunday of the month for all enquires on weddings and baptisms from 12 noon to 1pm

A Scripture to reflect on:

James 3

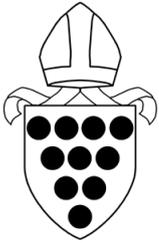
Taming the Tongue

3 Not many of you should become teachers, my brothers and sisters, for you know that we who teach will be judged with greater strictness. ² For all of us make many mistakes. Anyone who makes no mistakes in speaking is perfect, able to keep the whole body in check with a bridle. ³ If we put bits into the mouths of horses to make them obey us, we guide their whole bodies. ⁴ Or look at ships: though they are so large that it takes strong winds to drive them, yet they are guided by a very small rudder wherever the will of the pilot directs. ⁵ So also the tongue is a small member, yet it boasts of great exploits.

How great a forest is set ablaze by a small fire! ⁶ And the tongue is a fire. The tongue is placed among our members as a world of iniquity; it stains the whole body, sets on fire the cycle of nature, and is itself set on fire by hell. ⁷ For every species of beast and bird, of reptile and sea creature, can be tamed and has been tamed by the human species, ⁸ but no one can tame the tongue—a restless evil, full of deadly poison. ⁹ With it we bless the Lord and Father, and with it we curse those who are made in the likeness of God. ¹⁰ From the same mouth come blessing and cursing. My brothers and sisters, this ought not to be so. ¹¹ Does a spring pour forth from the same opening both fresh and brackish water? ¹² Can a fig tree, my brothers and sisters, yield olives, or a grapevine figs? No more can salt water yield fresh.

Two Kinds of Wisdom

¹³ Who is wise and understanding among you? Show by your good life that your works are done with gentleness born of wisdom. ¹⁴ But if you have bitter envy and selfish ambition in your hearts, do not be boastful and false to the truth. ¹⁵ Such wisdom does not come down from above, but is earthly, unspiritual, devilish. ¹⁶ For where there is envy and selfish ambition, there will also be disorder and wickedness of every kind. ¹⁷ But the wisdom from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, willing to yield, full of mercy and good fruits, without a trace of partiality or hypocrisy. ¹⁸ And a harvest of righteousness is sown in peace for those who make peace.



THE CHURCH
OF ENGLAND

DIOCESE OF
WORCESTER

To all clergy, churchwardens, PCC secretaries, Readers and ALMs

Dear Colleague,

As you may be aware, it was announced at the last diocesan synod meeting that our diocesan accounts for 2018 show a shocking £1 million loss. This is clearly not a sustainable situation. Accompanying this letter you will find a note from our Diocesan Secretary, John Preston, which sets out the situation and how Bishop's Council, at an extraordinary meeting this week, agreed that we should address the very considerable challenges we face.

Initially, we shall be looking at reducing costs in the diocesan office. We are aiming to make necessary changes quickly to ensure they have the least destabilising impact. When they do, I fear they will be bound to result in a diminution of support that can be offered to parishes. I should be grateful if you could bear this process in mind when contacting the diocesan office over the next few months since it is bound to be a difficult and unsettling time for staff.

We shall also be taking a longer term look at ministry costs across the diocese. This will be a slower process and will include wide consultation at all levels about how to make necessary savings. Do look out for further information as to how you can be involved in this if you would like to.

The sad truth is that both processes will inevitably result in the loss of posts. We shall only be able to keep this to a minimum and, at the same time, fulfil our vocation to be Kingdom People, increasing rather than decreasing our reach, if we all review our giving and encourage one another to give sacrificially. Increased regular giving increases parishes' capacity to fund local mission whilst, at the same time, supporting their parish share contribution – which is our biggest income stream.

I should be grateful if you could let all those associated with our churches know of this situation, how we are planning to address it and, most importantly, hold the whole process and those affected most by it in your prayers.

With my very good wishes, Yours,

Dr John Inge

The Rt Revd Dr John Inge

THE BISHOP OF WORCESTER

Passiontide 2019

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read 'John Inge', is centered on the page. The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

The Bishop's Office, The Old Palace, Deansway, Worcester WR1 2JE +44 (0) 1905 731599 (phone); 739382 (fax) - email: bishop.worcester@cofe-worcester.org.uk

The Financial Challenges: Why are we in a fix, and what can we do?

In 2018 the Diocese made a deficit of over £1 million for the first time. This arises because we spent more on parish ministry, support for ministry and mission and our administration than we received as income.

What's behind this?

The simple answer is that we struggle to beat inflation, as parishes and as a diocese. Charting the income of parishes and the diocese below shows markedly similar patterns - over the past ten years the unrestricted income of parishes (left chart) and the diocese (right chart) has been broadly flat (the blue line); whilst inflation has meant that the real value of this has decreased (the dotted red line). It is certainly not the case that diocesan income has been increasing while parishes struggle – we are all in this together.

11 10 9 8 7 6 5



2001 2003 2005 2007 2009 2011 2013 2015 2017

8 7 6 5 4



2001 2003 2005 2007 2009 2011 2013 2015 2017

Why?

There are some clear, yet profound, challenges that are behind this:

At parish level, statistics show that on average we're losing around 2% of our givers each year, yet those who remain are increasing their giving by around 2%, thus causing income to be flat.

With regard to parish share, parishes were able to increase their contribution last year by 1.1%, which represents a clear commitment from many parishes; yet because this is lower than the amount requested, the percentage contributed dropped and the level of our deficit increased. But haven't we got loads of money in reserves? Yes..... and no!! Parishes have over £24 million in reserves, although a proportion of this is restricted. It's unevenly distributed – some parishes have considerable reserves, others have very few. The Diocese does have £42 million of 'Endowments' – but this money cannot legally be spent. All we can do is receive an income from this. Last year we received a contribution of £900,000 towards clergy stipends which meant that we were able to ask for less in Parish Share. Our accounts also show £18.8 million of housing assets – the vast majority of which is the provision of homes for our clergy. Our unrestricted reserves, the money we can spend, dropped by £1.2 million to £4.8 million last year. It's running out.

¹ Legally, the Diocesan Board of Finance.

£ Million

£ million

How are we tackling this?

We will need to reduce our spending, and seek to increase our income. The Bishop's Council has tasked two groups to develop proposals to make significant reductions in spending, (one with regard to central costs at the diocesan office, the other with regard ministry costs in the wider diocese) whilst ensuring that as far as possible we are able to maintain our focus on mission.

We're also proposing to Synod that we establish a group to review the Share System. This will not solve all of our issues, but it is clear that the system needs some degree of change.

How can we help as a parish?

What is clear is that this is an issue that is facing us as parishes and as the diocese. We're facing declining numbers and a corresponding decline in finance. Here are three things that we can do:

- 1) Ensure that we are focused on mission and bringing new people into Church. This is not primarily to attract more givers, but first and foremost so they can come to know the love of God.
- 2) Encourage generosity. In particular, consider joining the Parish Giving Scheme ([click here](#) if viewing this electronically, or search for 'E2' on the diocesan website).
- 3) Be as generous as you can with your Parish Share contribution. Some parishes have seen a reduction in the amount of Share asked this year, whilst other parishes have seen a very high increase. If some of those who have seen a reduction are able to contribute for a year or two at the previously requested level this would ease the pain for those seeing very large increases.

Keep going

“Sitting still kills.” This rather startling observation from a scientist at Queen's University Belfast follows research which found that couch potato lifestyles could be causing up to 70,000 deaths in the UK each year.

More than 10 per cent of all deaths is due to sedentary living, which raises the risk of heart disease, diabetes and cancer. But as one doctor says, more exercise “doesn't have to mean major lifestyle changes – just build more activity into your everyday life. Stand on the bus, stand when you talk on the phone. Take regular short walks.”

Guy and Catherine write ...

As you read this letter, we will be in the Easter season – the weather forecast for Easter Sunday is hot!!

We will have walked through Holy Week; through Maundy Thursday, the pain of Good Friday, the quiet stillness and deep grief of Holy Saturday into the glorious light, life and hope of Easter Sunday. There was no Easter message from the Clergy in the April magazine. Hopefully Holy Week and Easter Sunday has given that! Now we look forward to the Ascension and Pentecost.

Hope has been described as love with outstretched arms - the Good News of the Gospel, the resurrection of Jesus Christ and the new life He has given us, is for us to share.

As a parish we must be outward looking to share this Good News with the people of Gornal and Sedgley. That is why we exist.

We cannot be inward looking into our church community for if we are, as a church we will surely die. Jesus sends us! We are not meant to be comfortable and pleased with ourselves inside the church buildings! We are meant to go out into the parish and take the Good News with us!!!

The Commissioning of the Disciples – Matthew 28

¹⁶ Now the eleven disciples went to Galilee, to the mountain to which Jesus had directed them. ¹⁷ When they saw him, they worshipped him; but some doubted. ¹⁸ And Jesus came and said to them, 'All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. ¹⁹ **Go therefore and make disciples of all nations**, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, ²⁰ and teaching them to obey everything that I have commanded you. And remember, I am with you always, to the end of the age.'

We must look outwards to share the Easter promise and to see our world, our community, our families, our lives transformed.

Our country faces political uncertainty. We are in challenging times as a church community. The Church of England is in a pickle! Our diocesan and parish finances are not in a positive place; as a parish we did not pay our full parish share for 2018. Together this may well have a direct effect on our ministry here in Gornal and Sedgley. Look at the letter from Bishop John in this magazine. We may well see a reduction in stipendiary clergy in the Diocese; we are certainly not immune from this.

We can see real green shoots appearing in the parish – see the article from the APCM report. However, we must work together united across the whole parish. We need each other.

We must build each other up and encourage one another. In the letter to the Ephesians Paul writes in Chapter 4 verse 29:
'Let no evil talk come out of your mouths, but only what is useful for building up, as there is need, so that your words may give grace to those who hear.'

We are built up by love; received in so many ways but wonderfully through the grace and power of the Holy Spirit.

In the letter to the Galatians we read:

The Works of the Flesh

¹⁶ Live by the Spirit, I say, and do not gratify the desires of the flesh. ¹⁷ For what the flesh desires is opposed to the Spirit, and what the Spirit desires is opposed to the flesh; for these are opposed to each other, to prevent you from doing what you want. ¹⁸ But if you are led by the Spirit, you are not subject to the law. ¹⁹ Now the works of the flesh are obvious: fornication, impurity, licentiousness, ²⁰ idolatry, sorcery, enmities, strife, jealousy, anger, quarrels, dissensions, factions, ²¹ envy, drunkenness, carousing, and things like these. I am warning you, as I warned you before: those who do such things will not inherit the kingdom of God.

The Fruit of the Spirit

²² By contrast, the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, generosity, faithfulness, ²³ gentleness, and self-control. There is no law against such things. ²⁴ And those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires. ²⁵ If we live by the Spirit, let us also be guided by the Spirit. ²⁶ Let us not become conceited, competing against one another, envying one another.

Everyone has experienced the harm of gossip. Even if the people talking didn't mean direct harm, the result of gossip is always broken trust and hurt feelings.

Gossip can be defined as information about the behaviour or personal life of other people, often without the full truth revealed or known.

God's Word warns us to stay away from people who gossip and to guard our words when we speak about others!

Scripture also uses the word slander which means making a false spoken statement damaging to a person's reputation. Slander can destroy someone's marriage, family, job, wealth or even church.

The tongue has power and we must be careful how we use our words. Elsewhere in the magazine is chapter 3 of the letter to James which speaks to us about this.

Let's be grace givers, let's build each other up!! May our community know we are Christians by our love! Let's pray that we will see our lives, our parish and our community transformed by the Good News of Easter and the power of Pentecost!

Guy and Catherine, May 2019.

The Deaneries of Stourbridge, Kingswinford and Dudley are holding a joint Deanery Synod meeting

Date: Tuesday 7th May

Venue: Church of Ascension School, Wall Heath DY6 9AH
(parking available in the school playground)

The main speaker will be Margaret James, Diocesan Director of Education.

Margaret will give a perspective on the changing world of education today and the role of church schools within it and then open up conversation.

This is an open Synod meeting and you are particularly encouraged to invite representatives of any local schools, staff and members of governing bodies, to attend.

Margaret will begin her presentation at 7.45 pm.

Please could members of synods arrive for 7.15 to enable any essential deanery business to be carried out between 7.15 – 7.30.

The meeting will end by 9.15. (The school will be open from 7.00)

Our parish priorities are Prayer, and Children and Young People

This is an edited and in parts expanded extract from the report which Guy and Catherine prepared for the for the Annual Parochial Church Meeting of the Parish of Gornal and Sedgley which was held 7th April 2019. Please speak to Gail in the office if you would like a copy of the original report.

Ole Hallesby (a Norwegian Lutheran Theologian) wrote that *'If the labour of prayer does not precede as well as accompany all of your work in the Kingdom, it will become nothing but the work of a human, more or less capably done and with more or less effort and agitation as the case may be, but resulting in nothing but weariness both to ourselves and to others.'*

Deeply rooted in prayer and study of the scriptures:

Prayer is THE most important activity we do as Christians and having this as a priority is paramount to everything we do as a church. Our personal prayer life feeds us and the work of the parish. There are several opportunities for sharing prayer across the parish. Parish Prayers happen three mornings each week; all at 9:15am, Tuesdays at St Andrews, Wednesdays at St Peters and Thursdays at All Saints. Additional prayer meetings are also available during each Month; one in the evening at 7.30 pm and one in the afternoon at 2.30pm; both meetings have mainly been held at All Saints Vicarage. We encourage as many people to come as are able. The plan is for these prayer times to continue each month.

As we journeyed towards Easter to celebrate Jesus' glorious resurrection we first had to travel through Lent towards Good Friday. As part of that journey this year we have had our Lent course at 2 venues.

Mondays, 3:00pm at St Andrews Church Hall, Thursdays at the vicarage in Sedgley at 7:30pm. The course material we have been using in 2019 is the Prayer Course based on the Lord's prayer. About 25 people from across the parish have been meeting.

Many churches grow when church members meet to pray and study the scriptures outside of Sunday mornings. As a follow on from one of last year's Lent groups a home group was formed which continued to meet and completed the Alpha course together. Those who attend the group have found this of great benefit, and our aspiration and our prayer, is for more home groups to form. In the parish magazines for February 2019 you can read testimonies from many of those who attended the home group and the Alpha course and how people have grown in their understanding, and confidence. We hope that at least one new group will continue after Lent.

In the Diocese of Worcester Bishops John and Graham are inviting parishes to take part in a prayer initiative called 'Thy Kingdom Come' for the 11 days between Ascension Day and Pentecost. On Pentecost Sunday there will be a gathering at the Priory in Priory Park, Dudley, DY1 4EU co-lead by Bishop Graham and we hope to have a good group from Gornal and Sedgley there – if you need a lift let us know. During the 11 days of prayer leading up to Pentecost Sunday we will have resources available to help our prayer including a Morning and Evening prayer book for the period. **Archbishop Justin Welby writes:**

Thy Kingdom Come is a global prayer movement that invites Christians around the world to pray for more people to come to know Jesus. What started in 2016 as an invitation from the Archbishops of Canterbury and York to the Church of England has grown into an international and ecumenical call to prayer.

During the 11 days of Thy Kingdom Come, it is hoped that everyone who takes part will:

Deepen their relationship with Jesus Christ

Pray for God's spirit to work in the lives of those they know

Come to realise that every aspect of their life is the stuff of prayer

After the very first Ascension Day the disciples gathered with Mary, constantly devoting themselves to prayer while they waited for the outpouring of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost. Like them, our reliance on the gift of the Holy Spirit is total – on our own we can do nothing.

Through the centuries Christians have gathered at that time to pray for the coming of the Holy Spirit. 'Thy Kingdom Come' picks up this tradition. Over the past three years more and more worshipping communities have dedicated the days between Ascension and Pentecost to pray 'Come Holy Spirit'.

We are praying that the Spirit would inspire and equip us to share the Good News of Jesus Christ with our friends and families, our communities and networks. It has been amazing how many varied ways there have been in which people from every tradition have taken up this challenge. The effects have been remarkable.

It is our prayer that those who have not yet heard the Good News of Jesus Christ and his love for the world will hear it for themselves and respond and follow Him. Specifically, we again invite each and every Christian across the country to pray that God's Spirit might work in the lives of 5 friends who have not responded with their 'Yes' to God's call.

Whether you have joined in 'Thy Kingdom Come' before or not, we invite you to take part this year – along with churches from over 65 different denominations in 114 countries around the world.

"You will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you will be my witnesses ...to the ends of the earth. When he had said this...he was lifted up, and a cloud took him out of their sight... Then they returned to Jerusalem ... and were constantly devoting themselves to prayer... When the day of Pentecost had come, they were all together in one place... All of them were filled with the Holy Spirit... and that day about three thousand persons were added."

Acts 1, 2

"In praying 'Thy Kingdom Come' we all commit to playing our part in the renewal of the nations and the transformation of communities."

Archbishop Justin Welby

Dedicated to helping children and young people to belong and be nurtured in faith:

The Calling Young Disciples (CYD) hub team (Guy, Catherine, Helen Laird (Mission Enabler), Suzanne Bradley, Liz Williams, Jan Humphries, Barbara Price, Laura Robinson, Claire Cox and Jackie Hewlett), have regular meetings to discuss our current and future engagement with young people and families. We are very privileged and glad to have Helen Laird working with us. Earlier in the year we met, along with Chris Williams our Vestry Clerk at All Saints, to discuss how we can better engage with Baptism families of which there are many and are we looking to invite those that have been baptised in recent years to a Teddy Bears picnic. We have delivered or are planning:

a half term holiday event at All Saints Hall on the 19th February

a pancake party at St Andrew's Hall on Shrove Tuesday

the Good Friday Workshop at All Saints Hall

a Teddy Bears picnic on the 11th July for families to with young children to which we will invite our Baptism families

and we are looking to put on a Light Party on 31st Oct, as an alternative to Halloween, we hope that this will be at St Peter's hall and we'll include invitations to the unformed groups.

The Christingle service across the parish again drew many people to come and worship and the school carol services in All Saints saw many hundreds of children in church. The Christmas Tree Festival in All Saints was also blessed with the singing of local children at the opening dedication.

As part of engaging with young people in the parish, particularly the unformed groups at St Peter's, we put in the Pet Service on 10th February, which was very well received by those who I chatted to; we had 54 people attend including 10 children. Its estimated that there were around 10 dogs and two hamsters! Members of St Peter's unformed groups also sang at the Christmas light switch on in Upper Gornal, rehearsed by Suzanne Bradley.

The Sedgley Scout Group were invited to a service to mark St Georges day and we had a very positive Scout Group Christmas Carol service which was very well attended.

Mothering Sunday was well attended at all 3 churches with the Scout Group being represented at St Peter and the Brownies and rainbow being represented at All Saints and Singing Angels at St Andrew.

In preparation for the Christmas services in 2018 a new leaflet was designed and produced to outline the children and young people's activities in the parish. Many leaflets were handed out over Christmas, and at baptisms in the parish.

Singing Angels and Archangels at St Andrew continues to attract 20-30 children each Week on a Sunday afternoon, with a third of the St Andrew's electoral role being involved with helping. It is always a joy to be involved and seeing God working in the lives of the children and helpers. Claire and Paul Cox and the growing team work very hard and this work is a blessing to the whole parish. The Singing Angels regularly have a service to celebrate the theme of the work they do together and in March 2019 Archdeacon Nikki Groake came to a very lovely service in St Andrew's.

Another parish activity is the development of a new youth group, based mainly between St Andrews and All Saints. It is planned that the group will meet monthly and has a small and creative team working with Laura Robinson our parish youth and children's ALM. On the second meeting of the youth group 18 young people attended.

Noah's Ark play group at All Saints has continued to be a great blessing to the local community with an extremely dedicated and committed team of 11. The group is always well attended and has a lovely bright and lively atmosphere. We are planning a new monthly story with a Christian message to be shared with the children and their carers.

Little Angels play group at St Andrews likewise continues to be a blessing to the community. It is very well attended with a committed and hard-working team which could be added to if people are willing!

Our hard working Open the Book Team are very active and very well received in 2 of our local schools. The team consists of people from all 3 churches and is a very encouraging and significant part of our mission to the parish.

Paul Wilmott a children's evangelist represents the parish taking assemblies in 3 schools and Guy takes assemblies regularly in the Straits School.

Please do pray for all that is happening in the parish,
With our prayers for you all,

Guy Hewlett and Catherine Mitchell

Dry and keep your own flowers

Love the flowers in your garden just now? Why not preserve them? The art of preserving flowers was very popular in Victorian times, and it is still good fun. It is an inexpensive hobby, for all you really need are some small flowers, some paper and a weight.

Start with something simple like buttercups, daisies, pansies, forget-me-nots or little roses. Even grasses and leaves work well. The best time to gather them is from lunchtime onwards, after the dew has evaporated. They mustn't be too wet, or they will go mouldy. Put the flowers into a plastic bag until you get home.

Then lay them, one by one, onto blotting paper and place a sheet of blotting paper on top. Put all this between two layers of newspaper, like a 'sandwich'. You don't need an expensive flower press – a piece of wood and a couple of heavy books will be fine.

Leave the flowers under the press for six to eight weeks. Resist the temptation to see how they are doing! Then near the end of summer, spend an evening opening your flower 'press' and using tweezers to carefully lift out the brittle dried flowers. Arrange them on a card and use a gum solution to glue them into place. You could then cut some sticky clear plastic film to size, and carefully seal it over the flowers. They can decorate little birthday cards, bookmarks or pictures

Ladies Society

April meeting – “You couldn’t make it up!”

In April our meeting started with a presentation being made to Mary in order to celebrate her 80th birthday. We all hope that she had a wonderful day with her family.

Terry Church made a welcome return to our meeting and entertained us with many observations on how life has changed over the past decades. His stories covered weather forecasting, political life, gardening, TV and radio, holidays and “job-worths” encountered during his life, to name but a few.

He used many amusing examples to highlight how standards of communication have changed in recent years and how often figures of speech are used which do not make sense: footballers giving “120% effort”; pub “happy hours” lasting from 4pm to 7pm; and “Black Friday sales” which last for the month of November!

On Wednesday 10th April we also visited the Dormston Theatre to watch a fabulous production of Sister Act. I hope everyone enjoyed it as much as I did – the standing ovation at the end suggests that they did.

There is no meeting in May because of the holiday, and so I look forward to seeing you at our next meeting in June when Debbie Castle will talk to us about “Teaching with a cross in my pocket”.

Karen Evans

A mother’s poem

“Cleanin’ and dustin’ can wait for tomorrow.
Babies grow up, I’ve learned to my sorrow.
So quiet down cobwebs; dust go to sleep
I’m rockin’ my baby, cause babies don’t keep!”



All Saints Altar Flowers

Rosemary and the Margarets do an excellent job of maintaining flowers in church that, I feel sure, is widely appreciated.

However, the current arrangements for receiving donations are not ideal. Accordingly, I am seeking to put flower donations on a more formal basis.

Linda has agreed to take on administration of donations, being managed through a Flower Envelope scheme that identifies whether the donor is eligible for Gift Aid. This will enable the 25% Gift Aid rebate from HMRC to be claimed.

For information, flower costs vary through the year and Rosemary advises that a typical, non-festival week costs circa £25.

New donors are always welcome and, in reviewing the list, opportunities may be identified. If you would like to donate please see Linda. Thanks,
John

Gluten Free Victoria Sponge

150g dairy free margarine

150g sugar

3 medium eggs

175g Free from SR flour

1 tspn vanilla

Jam

Gas Mark 4

Line and grease two 20cm cake tins.

Place all ingredients, except jam, into mixing bowl. Beat well until a smooth batter (wooden spoon / electric whisk). Divide batter between 2tins. Bake for 15-20 mins. It's done if soft to the touch, but not sloppy!

Allow to cool completely. Spread jam over one cake, then top with the other. Enjoy!

The truth about vacuuming

Plug-in vacuum cleaners are still more effective than the latest cordless ones.

So says *Which?* In tests, corded models picked up an average of 70 per cent of dust on a carpet, compared to the cordless models' average of just 41 per cent. In fact, *Which?* found more than a third of the cordless models to be so poor that they were ranked as Don't Buys.

The average cost of a Best Buy corded model is £240; the average cost of a Best Buy cordless is £300.

MOTHERS' UNION

We were pleased to welcome Janice Hickman to our April meeting. Janice, who was born in the East End of London, shared her interest in Cockney songs with us. She had acquired a book entitled 'Cockney Ding-Dong' full of old Cockney songs, some well known like 'Maybe it's because I'm a Londoner', to 'They're moving father's grave to build a sewer!' Janice remembered family parties, as a child, on New Year's Eve, singing many of these songs and we heard that she had seen the Crazy Gang at the Queen's Theatre in London. We enjoyed a lighthearted quiz which included Cockney slang, and famous Cockney people such as Alfred Hitchcock and David Beckham. The afternoon reminded me of how important our happy memories of times spent with family and friends are and how proud we should be of where we come from.

The following is a letter from our Worldwide President, Sheran Harper, which arrived in Holy Week.

'At this important time of the year I often reflect on the outstanding and transformational work and faithful commitment that makes Mothers' Union the unique organisation it is. We never shy away from the difficult, and are always on hand to support those most in need. Since I assumed office as Worldwide President, I have been reading and listening to numerous stories of the way our work is impacting and transforming families and communities. This has given me a deeper appreciation for our incredible love for Mothers' Union, our creative way of working and our generous spirit of giving. I am thankful for every member and supporter that makes this difference possible.

I am reminded of my own childhood days at Easter-time in the city of Georgetown. How quickly time has flown! After the long hours in church on Good Friday and Easter Sunday, my brothers and I would eagerly anticipate the packing of a delicious picnic basket by our parents and off we would go to the National Park or Seawall to fly our kites. As children kite flying always gave us something to look forward to during the holidays, and for the teachers a delightful essay topic.

It was only when I had my own family that I realised Easter is much more than picnics and flying kites. It gives us the assurance of God's amazing gift and hope of eternal life. This good news brings meaning to our lives and gives us the courage to look forward with confidence and enjoy the incredible journey which God has prepared for us.

May Easter 2019 be a time of sharing and blessing others. As our seasons change we move forward with hope in our heart, the gift of hope is a powerful one and allows a future beyond all we could ask or imagine.'
Love and Blessings, Sheran Harper

The Charity of the Month for March was the Mothers' Union project, 'Make a Mother's Day' which raised £110. Thank you to all who donated to this worthy cause.

Our Deanery Festival is on Tuesday 14th May, 2.00pm, at Church of the Ascension, Wall Heath. This will be an opportunity to meet our Diocesan President, Judith Grubb. It is hoped as many members as possible will attend. Anyone wanting a lift please let me know.

Dates

4th May 10.00am – 12noon Lenten Collection &
Coffee Morning in church

7th May 2.15pm Communion (at St Andrew's, The Straits)
followed by 'When being a vicar was your 'job' what next?'
Revd Canon Judith Oliver

14th May 2.00pm Deanery Festival at the Church of the
Ascension, Wall Heath.

21st May 7.30pm High Flyers, Sheila Bake

Liz Williams

Easter Poem

Jesus is alive,
The one they crucified,
He showed that he is Christ the Lord
He did just what he said,
He rose up from the dead
And now he lives for evermore.

Sophia Lily Hart 13th April 2019

Sophia is a pupil at All Saints' Church of England School, Trysull where there is a strong Christian witness

Signs & Symbols: Kneeling with body, mind and soul

Some of us prefer to kneel for just about everything in church. People around us might sit – but we are kneelers!

Time may have taken its toll though, and sadly the knees may not what they were. But if you visit different churches, you will find that not all of them have furniture designed to help you kneel.

Some have the wooden support so close to the pew back that you are 'forced' to perch your rear on the seat in order to physically fit. Others have the gap so wide you cannot reach the seat, so you have to kneel with a straight back. Some don't have anything to kneel on at all.

But why do we kneel in church? In church we're continuing the actions of those in the Bible – both at worship and when addressing Jesus. Just think of all those who knelt before Him to ask forgiveness or healing, or, like the single leper, to give thanksgiving.

In the conscious presence of Almighty God, as we come before Him in worship and supplication, what can we do but we kneel with our body, mind and soul?

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Epitaphs found on head- stones

In London:

Here lies Ann Mann
Who lived an old maid
But died an old Mann.

In Hartscombe::

On the 22nd of June
Jonathan Fiddle
Went out of tune.

In Wimbourne:

John Penny
Reader if cash thou art in want of
any Dig four feet deep and thou wilt
find a penny.

Church of England launches Persian language Communion Service

There are growing numbers of Iranian Christians in the UK. To help them at worship, the Church of England has recently launched a Persian language translation of Holy Communion.

The publication of the Farsi language service very much affirms that the C of E sees the presence of Iranians in churches as a gift, and wants to demonstrate its welcome and commitment to them.

The Bishop of Loughborough, Guli Francis-Dehqani, who came to the UK from Iran with her family when she was just 14-years-old following the 1979 revolution, presided at the service. Her father was the late Bishop Hassan Dehqani-Tafti, the first Persian Bishop in Iran, who was forced into exile after an attempt on his life and the murder of his only son

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My dear Nephew Darren



So, your bishop is dropping hints that you should begin to consider a move to having your own parish – ‘not forever in green pastures’ comes to mind. Do not be too hasty to leave; remember that a curate can do no wrong, but a vicar can do no right. That means that as soon as you get your own parish, you will be held accountable not only for everything that goes on inside the church, but also for the goal average of the local football team and the state of the economy. And if it rains for your first Summer Fete, you will be told reproachfully that this never used to happen when ‘the former vicar was here’.

As you begin to ponder this momentous decision, allow me to give you a few pieces of advice. It will be assumed in the parish that every new incumbent is bound to be worse than his predecessor. The greatest compliment I ever received when leaving a parish came from an elderly parishioner: “I’ve known six Rectors of this parish; you weren’t the worst.” Naturally the church you go to will have asked for a married man between 30 and 35 with a wife who will not have her own job but who wants to devote her entire life working for the parish – and it will be a definite advantage if she is a brilliant organist, professional caterer and fully computer literate. They will expect you to have two children, one of whom should be of primary school age, so he can attend the local Church school, where you will naturally wish to be chairman of governors and coach of the football team.

They will want you to have exceptional talents for attracting young people – but for young people who enjoy the sorts of Services that the present congregation prefer – and you should have the ability to stop a baby crying during Mattins with the briefest of glances. They will want you to bring ‘a breath of fresh air’ into parish life without changing anything. They will hope you will shun holidays, preach short sermons and be able to run a tight jumble sale.

Your CV is a little thin. If you could acquire a wife and family within the next six months, become an expert flower arranger and qualify as a football referee, chartered accountant and trained electrician and plumber, it would prove very helpful. If in addition, you learned how to service photocopiers, had a mini-bus available for church outings, were an heir to a family firm producing a single malt whisky and could provide reliable horse racing tips, your choice of parishes would be endless.

On the other hand, my advice would be to stop attending all meetings where you know the bishop may be present; out of sight, out of mind. Have your phone disconnected, your letterbox sealed and only appear in public wearing dark glasses and a false beard. Keep your head down, lay low, hold on to the charmed life of being a curate for as long as possible. Life will never be better.

Your loving uncle,

Eustace

Science and faith project to be extended

A project to promote greater understanding between Science and Faith is to be extended, thanks to new funding *Equipping Christian Leadership in an Age of Science*, (ECLAS) was first set up in 2015 and run by Durham and York universities in collaboration with the Church of England. Now it has received a generous grant from Allchurches Trust to continue its work from this month (April).

The new grant will allow a specialist team to continue work on public policy implications of Artificial Intelligence and robotics and other scientific advances.

The project will also develop a major piece of research into the impact of church engagement in Science and science related public affairs, together with a proposal to integrate Science more fully into the curriculum for trainee ministers.

The scheme has also funded work to promote greater dialogue between Science and Faith in churches and cathedrals through the Scientists in Congregations scheme, as well as digital resources for theological training



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Sunday 5th May

All Saints - 8am - Revd Guy Hewlett

10.30am - Revd Guy Hewlett

6.30pm - Book of Common Prayer - Evensong - Canon Jan Humphries

St Andrew - 9.30am - Worship for All - Canon Jan Humphries

St Peter - 10.30am - Revd Catherine Mitchell

Wednesday 8th May - St Peter - 10am - Revd Guy Hewlett

Sunday 12th May

All Saints - 8am - Revd Catherine Mitchell

10.30am - Worship for All - Canon Jan Humphries

6.30pm - Book of Common Prayer - Evensong - Revd Guy Hewlett

St Andrew - 9.30am - Revd Guy Hewlett

St Peter - 10.30am - Revd Catherine Mitchell

Wednesday 15th May - St Peter - 10am - Revd Catherine Mitchell

Sunday 19th May

All Saints - 8am - Revd Guy Hewlett

10.30am - Revd Guy Hewlett

6.30pm - Book of common Prayer - Evensong - Canon Jan Humphries

St Andrew - 9.30am - Worship for All - Canon Jan Humphries

St Peter - 10.30am - Revd Catherine Mitchell

Wednesday 22nd May - St Peter - 10am - Revd Catherine Mitchell

Sunday 26th May

All Saints - 8am - Revd Catherine Mitchell

10.30am - Revd Sarah Fenby

6.30pm - Book of Common Prayer - Holy Communion - Revd Catherine Mitchell

St Andrew - 9.30am - Revd Catherine Mitchell

St Peter - 10.30am - Worship for All - Suzanne Bradley

Wednesday 29th May - St Peter - 10am - Revd Guy Hewlett