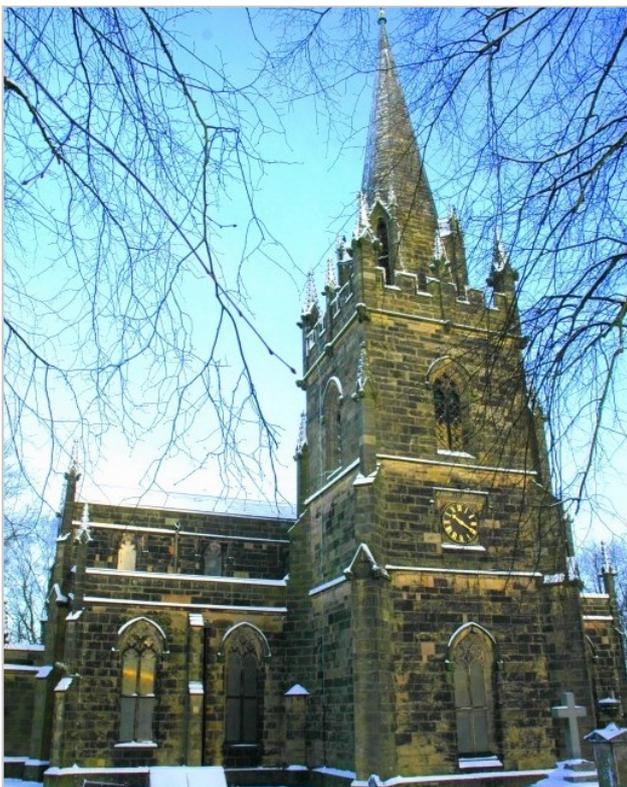


THE BEACON

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



50p

MARCH 2018

WHO's WHO

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Team Vicar	Catherine Mitchell	01902 677897
Licensed Lay Minister	Canon Jan Humphries	01902 661275
Pastoral Care	Tracey Bate	01902 680727
Worship Leader	Suzanne Bradley	01902 880055
Youth Leader	Laura Robinson	01902 678572
PCC Secretary	Chris Williams	01902 672880
Parish Office information baptisms, weddings, funerals and hall bookings.	Gail Griffiths	01902 540289
Parish Wardens	Keith Tomlinson John Anderson	01902 673366 01902 677666
Treasurer	John Anderson	01902 677666
Caretaker	Dave Bell	07933 204132
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 Parent & Toddler Group	Linda Edwards	01902 672556
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

DIARY DATES FOR MARCH 2018

Dates for Diary

March 6th - 2.30pm - Uganda - Liz Green - Mothers' Union

March 11th - 11.20am - in Church - ADCM

March 12th - 10am - Wave of Prayer in Church - Mothers' Union

March 19th - The Real Allo Allo - John Pittwood - Mens Society

March 20th - 7.15pm - Communion followed by from PC to Priest with
The Revd Guy Hewlett

Every Monday afternoon the Salvation Army meet in the meeting room and on the third Monday of the month there is a Singing by Heart Group for Dementia in the main hall. - All Are Welcome. For more details please contact Margaret Hollis on 07957 112393.

Baptisms

25th February - Astrid Cara Evans and Belle Margaret Hickman

Baptism at St Andrews - 11th February - Edwin Samuel John Wright.

Funerals in February

5th - Margaret Jurenovskis - 82 - Gornal Wood

6th - Anthony John Hedge - 77 - Gornal Wood

6th - Margaret Elizabeth Basford - 81 - Gornal Wood

14th - Harold Hand - 87 - Gornal Wood

19th - Lillian Nicholls - 79 - Gornal Wood

20th - Bernard Alan Bennett - 90 - Bushbury

27th - John Waterfield - 83 - All Saints'

High Days & Holy Days for March

1 St David (Dewi Sant) - guiding the Welsh Church through turbulent times

1 St David's Day – time for daffodils

2 Chad (d 672) – the recycled bishop

4 Casimir - godly king of Poland

NEW*5 Eusebius - friend of St. Jerome

7 Perpetua and Felicitas – joyful martyrs of Africa

8 Woodbine Willie - bringing love with cigarettes and the Bible

9 Savio - the youngster who found God

11 Mothering Sunday – 4th Sunday in Lent

11 Mothering Sunday – and Mother Church

17 St Patrick – beloved apostle to Ireland

20 St Joseph the Carpenter – gracious descendant of King David

20 St Joseph – patron saint of fathers and holy death

20 Cuthbert - beloved monk and bishop of Lindisfarne

21 Thomas Cranmer, Archbishop of Canterbury, Reformation Martyr

24 Catherine of Sweden – the good-natured carer

25 Palm Sunday: Jesus at the gates of Jerusalem

27 Rupert the salty

29 Maundy Thursday – time to wash feet

30 GOOD FRIDAY – the day the Son of God died for you

30 Good Friday – Jesus and the thieves on the Cross

30 John Climacus and his ladder to Paradise

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.

The Beacon is published ten times a year and the cost for the year is £5. A larger typeface version of The Beacon can be provided on request.

Articles for the April magazine need to be sent to:

admin@allsaintssedgley.co.uk

by

Friday 23rd March

and needs to be in Arial typeface, size 18.

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

If you know anyone who wishes to enquire about weddings or baptisms, please tell them that from 1st February, the Vestry Hour will only be held on the first and third Sundays in each month, from 12noon to 1.00pm.

Bishop John's Lent Message 2018

This year's Lent Message was filmed at a place that, I dare say, will be familiar to many of you: the Worcester Royal Hospital.

Our National Health Service been on my mind recently having badly broken my wrist ice-skating with my 13 year-old on New Year's Day – yes, I know, I should know better! I ended up spending five hours in A&E at the Worcester Royal before being admitted to have a plate fitted under general anaesthetic. It's on the mend though I still bear the marks.

It wasn't the best preparation for my wedding but I came away with a deep sense of gratitude for the NHS. We hear lots about the strain it is under but we don't often stop to remember how fortunate we are to be able to benefit from it – more so than all our forebears and the vast majority of people in the world today. Having broken my wrist on a Bank Holiday I was treated and fixed within 24 hours by wonderful people whose skill and cheerful dedication to the welfare of their patients was inspiring.

Though it's not much recognised as such nowadays, the NHS is a profoundly Christian institution. It was intended by its founders, who included the then Archbishop of Canterbury, William Temple, to be a sort of institutional answer to the question 'Who is my neighbour?' The answer is, of course, that everyone is my neighbour. When you hear an ambulance siren, it's a sign of paramedics going to help someone in need on behalf of us all.

This Lent, I'd like to encourage you to count your blessings – especially ones like the NHS that you might generally take for granted. More than that, as you contemplate prayer, fasting and almsgiving I'd like to encourage you to pray for and maybe help financially those who are not able to count on such blessings.

March 1st marks the tenth anniversary of my enthronement as Bishop of Worcester. I have much to give thanks for over that time – particularly

the support of people throughout the Diocese in good times and in bad.

As a mark of my own thanksgiving I'm setting up a Tenth Anniversary Lent Appeal for Berega Hospital in Morogoro where they are struggling terribly. I was shocked to receive a report from the Director Isaac Mgego recently which informed me that the Tanzanian Government has reneged on its responsibility to pay the wages of nurses and doctors. If you feel able, I invite you to contribute toward that appeal, in thanksgiving, as part of your almsgiving, and to give thanks for the very many blessings that God showers upon you.

God bless you this Lent.

How many of the 10 Commandments do you keep?

Moses may have brought 10 Commandments down from Mt Sinai, but nowadays it seems that many British Christians take only the final six of them seriously.

And so it is that most British Christians still believe that it is not a good idea to dishonour your father and mother, commit adultery, covet others' possessions, bear false witness, steal, or commit murder.

But they say they are not so bothered about the first four - the requirement to have no other gods before God, not to worship idols, not to use the Lord's name in vain, and to keep the Sabbath day holy. They say these are no longer 'important principles to live by', according to a YouGov poll.

And yet, it is hard to understand how someone who worships another god first, could still be considered a Christian, for whom 'Jesus is Lord'. It is a logical impossibility.

Letter from the Bishop of Dudley

God's work

Have you noticed that when you turn the pages of scripture people are often described by the job they do? Abraham was a herdsman, Noah was a farmer, David was a shepherd, the first disciples of Jesus were commercial fishermen, Matthew was a tax collector and Lydia was a merchant. Amongst other occupations, we meet doctors, tent-makers, perfumers, cooks, domestic servants, millers, sailors, prostitutes, shop keepers and builders. Jesus, who grew up in and around the family carpentry business, kept speaking of the world of work in his parables - farmers sowing seeds, women making bread or cleaning the house, and labourers in the vineyard. Work is all around.

In January I attended an event celebrating the 350th anniversary of Old Swinford Hospital School in Stourbridge. The guest speaker was the Bank of England's Chief Economist, Andrew Haldane, and he explored the rise of the robots and what this would mean for the future of work. Apparently further advances in computers may well mean that we don't need 95% of today's accountants, but teachers are harder to replace; we'll perhaps only lose 1% of them! I failed to ask for his prediction about clergy! Andrew Haldane was clear that we can trace major changes and trends in the job market back to the industrial revolution. Innovation and ideas have kept changing the need for different jobs and this will continue. He suggested that our challenge for the future of work is to be one step ahead of the machines by preparing people to work in areas that machines will find it hard to replicate. This means that creativity and the ability to think outside the box, as well as emotional intelligence and social skills, will all have a key place in the world of work.

It strikes me that the journey of Christian discipleship equips people very well in many of these future areas. In following God we are drawn into being co-workers for his Kingdom. God is always opening us up to the possibility of seeing things in his way, not following the crowd, but being open to new ideas and seeking to mend the world.

Prayer draws us into the slip-stream of God's wonder and transformation, seeing the needs of our neighbours and those the world wishes to leave behind. And our churches are social places where generations mix and learn together.

Jesus compared the work of building his Kingdom to the manual labour of those working in the fields, to the fishermen out all night and to the ownership of a vineyard. The workers bring in their offering of grain and fish and grapes to create a feast. As we prepare for Holy Communion we offer the work of human hands, taking kneaded and baked bread, and squeezed and fermented grape juice, together with our whole selves, our work, our joys, our sadness and struggles. We offer back to God in thanksgiving for what we receive. This is what St Benedict called *opus Dei*, the work of God, to which we are all called to contribute.

Bishop Graham

So you think English is easy?

Read on:

- 1) The bandage was wound around the wound.
- 2) The farm was used to produce produce.
- 3) We must polish the Polish furniture.
- 4) The soldier decided to desert his dessert in the desert.
- 5) Since there is no time like the present, he thought it was time to present the present.
- 6) A sea bass was painted on the head of the bass drum.
- 7) The insurance was invalid for the invalid.
- 8) They were too close to the door to close it.
- 9) After going out after having done some sewing, a sewer fell into a sewer.
- 10) Upon seeing the tear in the painting I shed a tear.
- 11) He took his bow and shot an arrow into the bough and took a bow.

God So Loved the World

‘For God so loved the world that He gave His one and only Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish but have eternal life.’ (John 3:16)

This verse has been described as ‘the greatest verse in the Bible’, as it enables us to understand the events of Good Friday and Easter Day. The cross and resurrection reveal the depth of God’s love for each of us.

God’s love is unconditional: God demonstrated the extent of his love by sending His Son into this world, to show us what it looks like: ‘God with skin on’! God graciously loves us, as none of us deserves it. ‘There is nothing we can do to make God love us more. There is nothing we can do to make God love us less.’ (Philip Yancey).

God’s love is sacrificial: The cross is the supreme demonstration of God’s love, as Jesus identifies with a fallen, suffering world. He died for our sins, removing the barrier between us and God, giving access into God’s presence and release from the power of sin and death.

God’s love is accessible: Jesus’ resurrection makes His eternal life available to all who put their trust in Him. It’s an offer of life with purpose, in which we can know God personally, both now and for eternity.

Bobby Moore described receiving the World Cup from the Queen in 1966 as terrifying: ‘I noticed that the Queen was wearing some beautiful white gloves. I looked down at my hands and they were completely covered with mud’!

Although we approach God with dirty and spoilt lives, by the cross and resurrection, we can shake hands with a holy God. He offers us ‘life in all its fullness’, with healing, forgiveness, peace and a fresh start in life!

Vicars Ponderings - March 2018

A Vicar's Life

Have you been watching the recent BBC 2 series “A Vicar’s Life” which follows several vicar’s in the Diocese of Hereford, as they cope with the joys and challenges of ministering to their flocks in the city of Hereford and in some of the most rural of parishes. “A Vicar’s Life” here in Gornal and Sedgley has many parallels, but also many different challenges.

One thing that we all share is that we are often meeting and engaging with people in some of the most challenging times of their lives, which is a privilege.

At theological college one of the techniques we learned was listening skills, which were brought into action on Ash Wednesday.

I was at St Peter’s for the 10:00am service, and helping to move the chairs into nice neat semi circles ready for the service, when a young lady came into the hall. I dutifully went to speak to her to see if I could help. In my head I was excited, thinking oooh a new person!... any way, I brought my listening skills into action as she told me a great tale of woe, where she was working shifts and she couldn’t go to her usually group....

I listened carefully, when she asked where could she get weighed!! She thought that we were the 10:00 Slimming World Group!!....After consulting Dave the church warden, we directed her to the Methodist church along the road!! I did invite her to stay and join us, but she was in a hurry to get on and get weighed!!

This of course is a humorous story, but it did remind me of the importance of welcome we are called to give towards those who visit our churches.

For some people this may be by accident, like the lady who came on Ash Wednesday, but also for those who may be seeking some quiet time in our churches, for those seeking consolation, for those seeking baptism or weddings information and for those seeking to know who God and Jesus is.

I believe it's often those first contacts can be so crucial in building relationships and helping people to know the blessings that a life of faith can bring.

So the next time a new person comes into church, for whatever reason, why not make them welcome.

Blessings

Catherine

Team Vicar

The unexpected effect of celebrity vicars

Celebrity clergy such as the Revd Richard Coles and the Revd Kate Bottley have helped the Church of England, by making it appear more accessible, and thereby boosting the number of trainee clergy up to a ten-year high.

Such is the belief of a number of church leaders, such as the Bishop of Repton, the Rt Rev Jan McFarlane. 'With Richard and Kate being on Strictly Come Dancing and shows like that, they've just come across as human people who happen to have a strong faith.'

And so, while in 2016 there were 476 new trainees; last year there were 544 new trainees. New priests are also getting younger; last year 28 per cent of trainees were under 32.

Mothers' Union

We were pleased to welcome Janice Hickman to our afternoon meeting in February. Janice is a Mothers' Union member who looks after our Diocesan members and AFIA (Away From It All).

The title of her talk was, 'A Song for every Occasion' in which she shared her love of old songs, with us. When events and situations occurred within her family there always seemed to be a song to fit the bill. Some of us could remember the songs and some (a little younger) heard them for the first time. It was a most enjoyable afternoon which ended with a short musical quiz with prizes.

'Childhood Memories' was an opportunity for the small group of us who met for our evening meeting to remember and share our memories. The long hot summers, playing out in safety, Mum's not having to work and being at home when you returned from school, memories of being an evacuee, sending a trunk on ahead while you travelled by train to your seaside holiday, the knitted swimming costume and liberty bodice, and so much more. The evening passed quickly as we recalled many of our childhood experiences, which sparked other memories. We often seem too busy to stop and share quality time with each other and this evening enabled us to do just that.

Our Wave of Prayer service is on Monday 12th March at 11.30am in church. This is an opportunity to remember our link dioceses. Those members who are unable to be at the service can pick up a service sheet from the back of our churches.

Our Lenten Project this year is to provide items for 'Starter Packs' for the Women's Refuge. Lists of the items needed are on the Mothers' Union notice-boards at All Saints' and at St Andrew's. There are boxes, in the narthex at All Saints' and at the back of church at St Andrew's, in which to place items during Lent. The Coffee Morning and Collection will be at All Saints' on Saturday 14th April.

Dates

Tuesday 6th March 2.30pm Uganda, Liz Green
Monday 12th March 10.00am Wave of Prayer Service, in church
Tuesday 20th March 7.15pm Communion, From PC to Priest, Revd
Guy Hewlett

Liz Williams

MAKE A MOTHER'S DAY

The Mothers' Union are promoting 'Make a Mothers' Day' again this year. The project raises funds for MU work caring for families worldwide. This will be the church 'Charity of the Month' during March. Further information about this can be found on the Charity of the Month board at the back of church.

Thank You

Thank you to everyone for your prayers, get well wishes and cards and gifts, following my recent knee operation, it means a lot to know people care. I am progressing well and hope to be back at church soon.

Jonathan

Thank you

I would like to thank everyone for their cards and gifts whilst I have been off work. Thank you for all the people who have rung me and have helped with the office.

Your thoughts and prayers have been so kind.

Thank you

Gailx

Ladies' Society February Meeting

Our February meeting was an informative and exciting account of the journey taken by Pauline and her husband on the last part of their world excursion. We were transported with wonderful photographs and dialogue from Hong Kong to Moscow by train.

Pauline recalled how they were met at Hong Kong airport by Tim, son of John and Sue Anderson. As usual they had very little baggage, just a backpack and small hand piece.

From their hotel bedroom could be seen fantastic views of Hong Kong harbour with its variety of ships from cruise liners to small ferry boats.

It was Silver Week, a festival of light, so each evening Hong Kong was ablaze with light and a laser show to enjoy.

On to Beijing and its wonders of Tiananmen Square, beautiful temples and the Great Wall of China, which although steep and slippery, was climbed by Pauline and Alan.

Next a visit to Xian and the marvellous display of the Terracotta Army. What a sight!

Another train journey through Mongolia to its capital city, Ulaanbaatar and a huge change in temperature from the 28 degrees of Hong Kong to minus 5 degrees. Hope you had room for the thermals?

Passing through desert terrain were views of wild horses and yak and a special turtle shaped rock and Ger houses where the yak herders live.

Statues of the famous Genghis Khan were seen.

The capital city is a fast developing modern city yet there remain many of the Soviet era buildings and museums in surviving monasteries to enjoy.

The final train to board, and off to Moscow where Pauline and Alan stayed on the outskirts of the city and took the metro into the centre where they viewed the sights of Red Square and Lenin's Tomb.

Thank you for sharing this amazing journey.

See you in March to enjoy "50's and 60's Radio and TV".

Anne Wakefield.

How often do you read the Bible? How often do you pray?

A recent poll of members of the Church of England has found that 60 per cent of people who say they are Christians also say that they never read the Bible. 36 per cent say they never attend church. 33 per cent say they never pray.

The figures, from ComRes, which was asked to do the poll, reveal that many people who claim to be Christians do not actually do the most basic activities associated with being a Christian. Of all the self-confessed Christians whom ComRes polled, those who said they were followers of the Church of England were the least observant.

Rachel Jordan, the Church's national mission and evangelism adviser, said the survey had given it 'a real sense of the scale of the task ahead... we, as a group of leaders across denominations committed to evangelism, wanted to devise a measure which shows us who the most committed people are – those who themselves might be willing to take on the task of spreading the good news of Jesus.'

This year, Mothering Sunday is on 11 March.

By Sam Setchell Communications Officer

Mothering Sunday is celebrated on the 4th Sunday of Lent and is traditionally the day when children, mainly daughters, who had gone to work as domestic servants were given a day off to visit their mother and family.

Centuries ago it was considered important for people to return to their home or 'mother' church once a year. So each year in the middle of Lent, everyone would visit their 'mother' church - the main church or cathedral of the area. Inevitably this return became an occasion for family reunions when children who were working away returned home and most historians think that this led to the tradition of children being given the day off to visit their mother and family. As they walked along the country lanes, children would pick wild flowers or violets to take to church or give to their mother as a small gift.

Mothering Sunday was also known as Refreshment Sunday because the fasting rules for Lent were relaxed that day. Simnel cakes have particularly been associated with the day. A Simnel cake is a fruit cake with two layers of almond paste, one on top and one in the middle. The cake is made with 11 balls of marzipan icing on top representing the 11 disciples (Judas is not included).

Please pray on Mothering Sunday for all mothers, as well as for those who will find this day difficult.

Scared

Some people are scared of church like they are scared of helicopters – they are frightened of being sucked into the rotas

Celebrating Easter – how do various Christians do it?

Virtually all Christians mark Easter (the Society of Friends or Quakers is one of a few exceptions). The ways they celebrate it vary:

The week leading up to Easter Sunday is often called Holy Week and Christians focus more deeply than usual on their faith.

It begins with Palm Sunday. Services on this day, seven days before Easter, recall Jesus entering Jerusalem triumphantly, cheered by crowds as He rode a donkey. Palm leaves were waved on that occasion, and are still significant in church worship, often twisted into the shape of a cross.

Four days later is Maundy Thursday, when Jesus' followers remember that on the night before He died He asked them to remember Him by eating bread and drinking wine. Maundy comes from the Latin word for commandment, recalling Jesus' command that day that Christians should love each other in the same way that He loves them.

The next day is Good Friday (called Holy Friday in countries with large numbers of Roman Catholic Christians). This is the most solemn day of the Christian year because it is used to recall the appalling death of Jesus. Although it is a public holiday, it is increasingly difficult to distinguish it from other days of the year, so many churches hold processions or open-air services in public places to draw attention to its significance. Inside churches there are meditative services in a bare setting. It may be that the day was originally known as God Friday, and the name changed as language developed. Elsewhere in the world, it is called Great Friday or Holy Friday.

Easter Sunday recalls the day when Jesus' followers discovered that His tomb was empty. It is the most important and joyful day of the Christian year. Jubilant music is performed, and flowers and banners fill the churches with colour. The centuries-old cry, 'Alleluia! Christ is risen!' is met with the response, 'He is risen indeed. Alleluia!'

In the first Christian centuries Easter Sunday was the day on which new converts to Christianity were baptised. This tradition continues in some places. More recent, but popular, ways of celebrating include Easter vigils late on Saturday night, which begin in darkness and culminate in the lighting of a fire in the early hours of Easter morning. Since the 18th century there has been a tradition of gathering on the highest local hill for a service of praise to God as the sun rises.

Want to be creative? Have a cup of tea

Tea-drinkers have always known that almost anything is possible, with a cup of tea in your hand, and now it seems that the scientists are catching up with them; for there seems to be proof that a simple cup of tea can spark an instant burst of your brainpower and creativity, enhancing your mood and cognitive ability.

Yet, although tea contains both caffeine and theanine, both of which increase attentiveness and alertness, these do not usually take effect as quickly as the simple act of drinking tea seems to do. Thus, researchers suspect that simply drinking the tea works to enhance your mood.

Tests found that drinking tea helped people in both divergent thinking (the process of coming up with a number of new ideas around a central theme), and also with creativity. This must make tea the go-to drink for writers, artists and musicians, and indeed anyone looking for inspiration. So - go put the kettle on!

The study appeared in the journal Food Quality and Preference.

WWI TIMELINE - EVENTS OF 1918

March 1918

- 2nd Kiev (Ukraine) captured by German forces.
 - 4th First German aeroplane raid on England undertaken on moonless night.
 - 21st **First Battle of the Somme 1918** or German Operation Michael begins with the Battle of St. Quentin as the beginning of the **Spring Offensive**.
- Dutch ships in British ports requisitioned by British Government: those in US ports requisitioned by US Government.
- 23rd Paris first shelled by long-range guns (from Crepy-en-Valois, 75 miles distant).
 - 24th First Battle of Bapaume (Somme): taken by German forces.
 - 25th Battle of Noyen (Somme): taken by German forces.
 - 27th Battle of Rosieres (Somme 26th/27th).
 - 28th First Battle of Arras 1918.

Operation Michael.

Named as 1st Battle of the Somme - 1918, the Germans began their Spring Offensive of which this was the first part. They made strong breakthroughs using gas, artillery, airpower and shock troops to bypass defensive positions in foggy conditions. **1 million shells** were fired in the 5 - hour bombardment to begin the battle.

In their advance the Germans had overstretched their supply lines and losses of over a quarter of a million casualties couldn't be sustained.

21,000 prisoners were taken as they overran British positions and created a 50 mile gap in the Allied line.

The Germans sent forward large Krupp cannons. The huge shells were in the air for 3mins 30secs., and 183 hit the French capital, killing over 250 people.

26 British divisions with 2,600 guns were set against
62 German divisions with 6,600 guns.

The Spring Offensive began on 21st March and ended with the Marne Offensive in July/August.

Edinburgh's One O'clock Castle gun

A letter appeared in *The Scotsman* newspaper on 14 January, 1918, of which this is part, concerning the effect the firing of the gun had on soldiers:

".....At the present time it is all the more an intrusion in that there are so many convalescent soldiers within range of the concussion. Two of these from Craiglockhart, suffering from shell shock, had to be carried home from Princes Street the other day after the shot was fired. We abolish police whistles in the vicinity of hospitals, why keep up this more violent reminder of their sufferings?"

'Shell shock' was the common name given for a range of emotional and mental disorders suffered by troops. Symptoms included hysteria, anxiety, physical tremors, sensitivity to noise, and nightmares.

Edinburg's Craiglockhart War Hospital treated soldiers suffering from shell shock; it was where Siegfried Sassoon met Wilfred Owen and encouraged him in his poetry writing.

The firing of Edinburgh's One O'clock Gun was halted in April 1918 and remained silent for over a year.

Rosemary Moss



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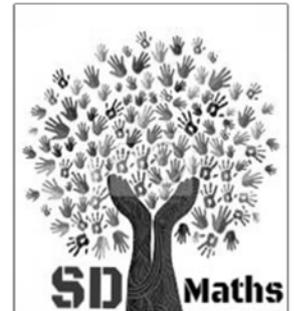


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Top four myths about mission: Myth one: Mission means we have to save the world

By Naomi Steinberg, Church Mission Society

As a 200+-year old mission community, we can tell you there are loads of myths about mission.

Why is it so important to “bust” these myths? Church Mission Society believes that all of God’s people are called to join in God’s mission. In summer 2017 we surveyed 2,000 Christians, 90 per cent of whom said they also felt that “the call is for all”.

Yet many things can hold Christians back from putting this call into action. One of those things might be confusion about what mission is – or isn’t. If we can help set people free from misconceptions about mission, more people might participate in mission – whether overseas or over the road.

From numerous conversations, we know that one common mission myth is that being in mission means we have to save the world. Eleanor, who did a short-term placement with CMS in Asia, told us: “As I grew up in my faith...I had a sense of wanting to save the world. I actually asked my mum one day, ‘Will you help me save the world please?’”

But wait. What’s so wrong about wanting to save the world? There’s much that needs changing! CMS was established by people whose faith led them to work for major world-change: people like William Wilberforce, John Newton and John Venn.

We don’t want to dampen anyone’s enthusiasm for world-change but we think it’s vital to understand who is actually doing the changing.

Put simply, God is at work in our world and we get to join in with what He's doing. Understanding this reality can liberate us for a life of mission that isn't about performance or pressure, but about passionate participation.

Tim Dearborn wrote: "God's Church falters from exhaustion because Christians erroneously think that God has given them a mission to perform.... It is not the Church of God that has a mission in the world, but the God of mission who has a Church in the world. The Church's involvement in mission is its privileged participation in the actions of the triune God."

Eleanor later said to us, "I'd been thinking about this idea of 'saving the world' and realising that I can't save the world myself. But God already has. Why not try to walk in His footsteps and serve with a love that leads people to God?"

If you're interested in taking a further step in God's mission, CMS is here to help.

When two plus one = loneliness

Becoming a parent is a wonderful thing, but it does bring enormous changes to your life. A new baby can take up so much time that it seems that half of all new mothers and fathers admit to feeling lonely, cut off from their friends and colleagues, and even family.

Recent research by Action for Children and Mumsnet found that 'having a baby changes your life in many ways, not all of them as joyful as you might expect.' And so, a new twitter campaign, #startswithhello is encouraging people to offer a 'hello' coffee or playdate to new parents in their neighbourhood.



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SERVICES FOR THE MONTH

MARCH 2018

4th March - Lent 3

All Saints - 8am - The Revd Catherine Mitchell
10.30am - The Revd Guy Hewlett
6.30pm - Evensong - Canon Jan Humphries

St Andrew's - 9.30am - Worship for All - Canon Jan

St Peter's - 10.30am - The Revd Catherine Mitchell

11th March - Mothering Sunday

All Saints' - 8am - The Revd Guy Hewlett
10.30am - Worship for All - Canon Jan
6.30pm - Evensong - The Revd Guy Hewlett

St Andrew's - 9.30am - The Revd Guy Hewlett

St Peter's - 10.30am - The Revd Catherine Mitchell

18th March - Lent 5

All Saints' - 8am - The Revd Catherine Mitchell
10.30am - The Revd Guy Hewlett
6.30pm - Evensong - The Revd Catherine Mitchell

St Andrew's - 9.30am - Worship for All - Canon Jan

St Peter's - 10.30am - The Revd Catherine Mitchell

25th March - Palm Sunday

All Saints' - 8am - The Revd Guy Hewlett
10.30am - The Revd Guy Hewlett
6.30pm - Compline - The Revd Guy Hewlett

St Andrews's - 9.30am - The Revd Catherine Mitchell

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